

Touch of the Dead

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Summary: When Snotlout finds a burial chamber in the woods, he's determined to take home the treasure inside for his father. With the help of the twins, he begins his excavations, but treasure is not what they find lurking inside... (NO SHIPPING, rated Kplus for minor horror scenes)

## 1. The Barrow

\_Okay, so, I'm back! It's taken me a long time to choose the name for this fic, but now that I have, I can finally publish it! I have a feeling this one might turn out to be kind of long, but maybe some people might like that, I don't know. Anyway, I hope you're all as exited as I am! It's great to start on something new. I'm hoping to update every two days, but that may well not happen, so you must just be patient with me!\_

\_Also, just to clear this up, Vikings did bury their dead in long barrows as well as burning them in ships. It was basically just that but on land, as far as I know. Then they shovelled a load of dirt on top. So yeah. No hate.\_

\_Here we go!\_

The dragon tossed its weight to one side, banking sharply. He beat his large wings hard, gaining speed again, swooping down, heading straight for his target. His eyes narrowed.

"Now, Hookfang!" Came the cry from his saddle, and the Monstrous Nightmare opened his jaws and let forth a great cloud of fire. The tree didn't stand a chance. The wood snapped and crackled as the flames ate it up in seconds.

"Woo-hoo!" Cried the dragon rider, throwing his arms above his head and almost knocking off his ram-horned helmet. Snotlout grinned in elation as he and Hookfang soared over the forest of Berk. The wind

whipped through his short, mud-brown hair and nearly torn his jacket from his broad shoulders. When Hiccup had announced that there would be no training that day, he'd quickly taken the opportunity to use the free time to destroy stuff and do some flying. Training exercises were good, but they could get boring quite easily. Burning trees to the ground in seconds never got tiring.

"Okay, Hookfang, let's find somewhere to rest. I'm starving, and those yak sandwiches looked so good..." His stomach growled as he licked his lips and steered his dragon towards a nearby clearing. Hookfang, also ravenous, followed his commands obligingly, landing neatly on a patch of mossy grass at the edge of a fairly large opening in the trees. Snotlout slid ungracefully from the saddle, hitting the ground heavily and stumbling. Straightening up as gracefully as possible, he brushed imaginary dust from his jacket and looked around.

"Whoa..." He breathed. Before him lay the single largest burial mound he'd ever seen. The great barrow stretched for at least twenty paces lengthways and was more than eight strides across. His mouth hung open in awe as he approached cautiously. Covered over in swaying, emerald grass, the colossal mound was taller than he was. Hookfang crawled beside his master as the two surveyed the burial mound, his head down beside Snotlout's waist. The rider just couldn't understand what his dragon was so worried about.

"This is incredible! Look at this thing, Hookfang!" Snotlout mused incredulously. "Imagine the kind of person who was buried here! I bet it was one of the first chiefs of Berk. What about what's inside? Think of the treasure! We could be rich beyond our wildest dreams! We could have all the ladies on the island drooling over us!" He reached out and took his dragon's jaw in his hands. "You'd like that, wouldn't you? Of course you would! Who wouldn't?"

He walked all the way around the barrow twice, looking it over for any openings, but there were none. At one end, there was evidence of an entrance, but it looked as though it had collapsed. He looked closely at the soft pink flowers that grew over the top, and then tried to climb up to get a better look. As he scrambled to his feet and looked down, he laughed at his dragon's expression.

"Hey, Hookfang! I'm taller than you!" He scoffed, smirking jokingly. The dragon reared up, thrusting his head high into the air and looming over his rider's head. Muttering curses, Snotlout slid back down to ground level. "We could be so rich, Hookfang. Imagine bringing some of this stuff back to dad. He'd be so pleased with me, don't you think?"

Snotlout's expression was almost unreadable. The joy and hope lit up his eyes, while longing for his father's love stood out in his slight frown. Blinking, and with his mind set on this single task, Snotlout Jorgenson clambered onto his dragon's saddle and, leaning back, he tugged Hookfang's horns and the dragon spread his wings.

"Sure, we'll help" Tuffnut Thorston folded his arms over his chest, his signature smirk adorning his long face. Snotlout grinned, turning to the girl stood beside him. She sighed.

"Whatever," Ruffnut snorted, feigning disinterest. She fiddled with the greasy, dirty-blond braids that cascaded down her chest, easily

reaching her waist. Stood beside her brother, the twins were almost indistinguishable from one another. They had the same bright, sky-blue eyes, the same flowing fair hair, the same turned-up noses and skinny, lanky build. They even had the same dragon. Barf and Belch stood behind their riders, the sun glinting off their emerald scales. With a click of their fingers, the Zippleback's heads came snaking around the twins, and the two climbed into their saddles.

The Zippleback followed the Monstrous Nightmare closely as Snotlout led the group back towards the clearing where he had found the burial mound. Hookfang was being slightly stubborn, shaking his head from side to side and snorting as his rider scowled insults at him. Seeing his struggle, the twins exchanged looks and gently urged their dragon on, pulling alongside their fellow rider.

"Having trouble there, Snotlout?" Tuffnut called across, smirking slightly.

"Yeah, stupid dragon!" The Jorgenson boy shouted back in annoyance, looking down at Hookfang. The dragon growled. "Doesn't matter, we're nearly there anyway."

The crimson Nightmare banked gently right, followed by Barf and Belch, their two heads bobbing up and down as they flew. Hookfang circled the clearing before setting down as far from the barrow as he could. Disgruntled, the dragon bent his neck to allow his rider the dismount. He was soon joined by the twins, leaving their dragon to bother the Nightmare as they stared in awe at the structure before them.

"Wow. That's cool," Tuffnut smirked.

"Totally awesome!" His sister agreed. "And look at the size of it!" She stretched out her arms, as though trying to grab the thing from the ground. Her brother chuckled.

"Just think about the stuff that could be inside it! It has to belong to one of the former chiefs of the tribe. No-one else could afford anything this big!" Snotlout announced proudly. "And it's all ours!"

Ruffnut's face fell. "Wait, this is a grave?" She asked, peering at the Jorgenson boy questioningly. He nodded, hands on his hips. "Whoa, whoa, guys. We can't just go digging up people's graves. Don't you know what happens if you do?"

"We've all heard the story, Ruff. But it's just an old hag's tale, made to scare little children so they don't steal the treasure inside. Now, are you guys gonna help, or are you too chicken?" Snotlout sneered, throwing a shovel at her brother. He caught it, sniggering, and the boys approached the burial mound.

\_Whoops! Looks like the boys are turned grave-robbers! And all to please Snotlout's father, as usual. I like to show Snotlout as a victim of his up-bringing, rather than just the run-of-the-mill jerk of the group, which he's not. I don't think it's fair to blame just him for his brazen attitude and idiotic antics. The twins, on the other hand, just have no common sense. At least, one of them doesn't. Who wants me to write out the tale that Ruffnut is talking about?

'Cause I will, just say the word.\_

\_All proof-read, but do tell me if you spot any errors so that I can change them. Thanks!\_

## 2. Excavations

\_Okay, here comes part two! I'm really liking this story so far, but I really wanna hear what you guys think, so please, R+R! Thank you!\_

Snotlout sank his shovel deep into the side of the barrow and ripped out the first lump of it's wall. The earthy, peaty smell that reached his nostrils smelled, to him, like success. Beside him, he watched as Tuffnut dug his in just beside the hole that Snotlout had made. The lads grinned at each other and continued digging.

"Don't you think this clearing is a bit of a weird shape?" Came a shout from behind them. Snotlout rolled his eyes and turned around to face Ruffnut, who was standing at the tree line. "Look!" She yelled, "I'm higher up than you two. The ground dips towards the barrow."

"Yeah, so?" Snotlout snorted, his shoulders shrugging. Ruffnut seemed about to answer, but then stopped herself. Somehow, she just couldn't come up with an answer. Snotlout went to turn around again, and she walked back down towards the other teens, tugging on her braids as she thought about it. Then, giving up, she simply began to walk around the barrow, looking it over closely.

"Aren't you coming to help dig, sis?" Tuffnut called, looking up from his work. Somehow, he already had dirt all over his cheeks and forearms. Ruffnut poked her head around the side of the barrow.

"Nah, you guys are doing fine!" She replied lazily. "Besides, there's only two shovels."

"Well, you could... dig with your hands or something."

"Nuh-uh. I'm not doing that. I'll just check around the barrow for anything that's fallen out."

"Oh, cool, good idea." Her brother mused, before turning his head back to his digging.

Listening to the complaining of Snotlout from the other side of the barrow, ("Ugh, this is taking forever!", "Get your hair out of my face!", "Why do you even have hair that long anyway?") the sister picked her way along the length of the burial mound. She looked at the small, pink flowers that covered it. They seemed so simple and boring that one could be forgiven for looking past them, but, when she looked closer, they were so much more than they first appeared. She reached out and plucked one, holding it up to the light and looking at the swirling patterns on each petal.

"Whoa, nice..." she mused, placing the flower back down on the grass. Everything seemed so peaceful here. \_No wonder whoever is buried here chose this place\_, she thought. \_It's so peaceful. Not even the birds

are singing...\_ She looked around, fear creeping slowly up her spine. It was eerily quiet, save for the sounds of shovelling from the other side of the mound. Ruffnut peered into the darkness of the trees. It was almost as though someone was watching her from in there...

Shaking herself back into sense, she quickly turned and made her way back to where the other teens were digging into the side of the mound. Neither one seemed to be as concerned as she was, and so she took a deep breath and tried to let it go. \_I'm just being stupid. Nothing's going on. Nothing. \_Assuring herself, she strode lazily up to the boys and peered over their shoulders.

"Found anything yet?" She asked, a little too loudly. Snotlout turned around and scowled.

"Does it \_look \_like we've found anything to you?" He snarled. "Urgh, there's nothing in here! This is so stupid. I give up. Let's go home." He tossed his shovel away, and Tuffnut straightened up, letting his spade drop to the ground. Ruffnut, however, peered closely at the dirt. Her brother, ever curious, followed her gaze.

"Wait... Snotlout, there's something here!" the brother cried, reaching out and brushing the soil away from a small glimmer of white.

"Ha! I knew it! Is it gold? Treasure? Jewellery? Weapons?" The Jorgenson boy's head thrust itself between the twins, knocking Tuffnut onto his backside. "What's this, a bone?"

"Looks like a claw to me," Ruffnut chimed. She was rewarded with Snotlout's sweaty palm in her face, pushing her away.

"Nobody asked you!" The teen was swept away with excitement.

"Hey! What do you think you're doing?" She retorted by kicking his ankle, but he didn't react. He was captivated by the shimmering bone. He brushed it with his finger-tips, a smile coming to his face.

"Guys... this person was buried \_with a dragon. \_Look at the size of this thing! He must have been the most famous person on the whole island! Now I know where Stoick gets it from. Do you know what this means?"

Tuffnut's arms flew above his head in a huge gesture. "Ooh, ooh, don't tell me! He.. rode a dragon! No, he killed a dragon! No? Okay, then he killed a dragon that he rode while killing dragons!" A wide grin was spread across his features, but his face fell almost immediately. The looks he was receiving from his sister and his friend were enough to silence him.

"This means that this guy was rich. Not just rich, but the richest guy on the whole island! He must have tons and tons of stuff inside this grave! We've gotta keep digging!"

"I don't think this is a good idea, Snotlout. This is a grave. If this guy was as great as you think he was, he could be in Valhalla right now, watching us. You know what happened in the story..."

Ruffnut warned. Snotlout turned around sharply to face her, jaw clenched, hands balled into fists. His eyebrows knitted together.

"I don't care about that stupid story. I'm going in there, getting all this treasure and taking it back to my father. Then, together, he and I can be richer than all of you! And he'll finally think I'm worth something." Snotlout's face was inches from Ruffnut's. His teeth were bared as he snarled: "I'm not scared of an old hag's tale. Are you?"

Ruffnut glared back, smashing her helmet against his. "No. Are you?"

"I already answered that. What's wrong, Ruffy? You scared? Are you... \_chicken\_?"

Her eyes widened as she pulled back, wrinkling her nose in disgust. "How \_dare\_ \_you? Of course I'm not chicken. I'm \_never\_ \_chicken."

"Prove it. Get digging." The boy crossed his arms across his chest, a smirk rising across his features. Ruffnut narrowed her eyes, pressing her hands together until her knuckles cracked. She then stooped down and snatched up a discarded spade and turned to the hole in the barrow wall.

Suddenly, her jaw dropped, as did the shovel in her hands. "Did that claw just... \_move\_?"

\_Ruffnut-Snotlout stand off! I liked that. Two teens, charged with hormones, having an argument over what's wrong and what's right. One's afraid and won't admit it, the other is charged with achieving the love of his parent. If they did fight, who do you think would win?\_

\_And did that claw just move? Find out next chapter!\_

### 3. What Lies Underneath

\_I can't believe it's chapter three already! I'm really liking the tone of this story now. Anyway, I'll leave further judgements to you guys. Onward!\_

"Oh, don't be \_ridiculous!\_" Snotlout snarled. He shoved Ruffnut in the shoulder, hard, sending her crashing to the floor with a cry of protest. "It's \_dead\_. It can't mo- agh!"

His eyes were caught on the sight of the bone, twitching in the soil. The dragons behind them gave alarmed cries, taking wing in panic. With a girlish scream, Snotlout Jorgenson turned and ran. Tuffnut retreated, falling onto his back in his fear. His sister was at his side in an instant.

"What do we do?!" Tuff cried as he was pulled to his feet. He couldn't tear his eyes off the hideous bone, squirming in the dirt, trying to dig itself out, it seemed. His sister looked at him, the same look of terror plastered on her features.

"Well, we've got to bury it again! That way, it won't be able to get

out!"

"Screw that, I'm outta here!" Her brother yelled, turning to go, but he was grabbed before he could take a step.

"You're helping me, stupid. I can't do this alone. Well, not quickly enough, anyway. Come on!" She shoved a shovel into his arms, taking up the other herself, and began hauling clumps of mud into the hole, covering the claw as best she could. With her brother's help, they managed to cover the thing before it could escape, and the twins were relieved when they finally patted down the soft peat.

"There, see? Easy!" Ruffnut stood back, proudly surveying her work. Tuffnut stood beside her, smirking, but the satisfied looks on their faces were wiped off in an instant as there was a quiet scraping noise, followed by the movement under the patch of mud that they'd just blocked the hole up with. Their jaws hung open, and they turned to look at one another in terror.

"No way..." The sister breathed. Her brother gulped.

"It can't still be..." Her brother replied. Some dirt fell away from the blockade.

The twins were frozen in place. Under their feet, the ground began to shake and vibrate violently. They watched with horror as the dirt was thrown out and holes began to appear in the barrow sides. Great cracks snaked their way along the length, as though something was trying to push its way out from the inside. It began to rise, and rise away from the ground.

It was all happening in slow motion. Ruff just couldn't tear her eyes away from the sight before her. Everything was blocked out, everything that had ever been and ever would be ceased to exist as time stood still around her. She couldn't hear her brother's frenzied shouts beside her, or feel the earth-shattering crashes as the barrow erupted before her eyes. Only one thought span around and around in her head.

\_What have we done?\_

She felt strong, calloused fingers wrap around her upper arm in an iron-like grip and tug her, returning her to reality. She heard her name shouted in her ear and the panicked pull of her brother behind her.

"Come on, Ruff! Let's get outta here!" He cried, before giving up, letting her go, and scrambling away. Ruffnut finally tore her eyes away from the sight and chased after her brother, watching him disappear between the trees.

It wasn't long before they caught Snotlout, leaning on a tree and heaving for breath. He watched as Tuffnut fell to the ground like a diver in the Thawfest Games, face first, and simply lay on the soft, mossy ground, grunting as he tried to catch his breath. His sister collapsed against a tree to his left, putting her hand against her head and leaning back against the trunk.

"Oh man..." she wheezed. "I don't think I've ever run so fast in my \_life.\_"

Her brother chuckled. "Yeah, certainly looks like it." He joked breathlessly. Ruffnut lashed out with her foot and caught him in the hip, rolling him over. "Ouch! Hey!"

"Don't say stupid stuff about me, then!"

"What? It's not my fault you look like a beached whale- Ow! Ow! Okay, Okay! Stop! Ouch!" Tuffnut raised his hands to try and protect himself as his sister launched a colossal attack on him, thrusting her fists into any place on him she could reach.

"Guys! Cut it out!" Snotlout growled, pulling the two apart. Tuffnut lay groaning in a heap while his sister cracked her knuckles and brushed herself down. "Look, guys, this is serious. What are we supposed to do now?" Both twins gave him a lost look.

"You're asking us?" Tuffnut blurted out.

"Yeah, you're supposed to be the clever one." His sister added.

Snotlout thought hard. "Okay, so here's what we're going to do. If anyone asks where we've been, we tell them we were training in the forest. Our dragons dumped us and we had to walk back." The Jorgenson boy regarded his two companions. "Don't mention this to anyone, okay? They'll go nuts if they find out."

"But shouldn't we tell someone? I mean, if this thing is heading for Berk, they might want to know." Tuffnut pointed out. Snotlout snatched him up by the front of his shirt, holding him up above his head. The vicious look on his face was enough to scare Tuffnut into silence.

"No!" He roared. "You don't tell anybody! If you do, I'll make you wish you'd never been born!" He could feel Tuffnut's hands scrabbling over his, trying to release his grip. The terror in his eyes almost made the boy feel bad. Almost.

"Put him down, Snotlout!" Ruffnut cried behind him, using the voice she usually used when Barf and Belch misbehaved. He glanced her way, seeing the stern look on her face, and, tossing her brother aside, he stalked off. The fury melted away as soon as he left them. Really, he was just afraid of what the others would say. What his father would say. He stopped and turned back, his face set in a grimace.

"Don't say anything. I've warned you." He snarled, then turned and trudged away.

The twins exchanged glances, both taken aback at the fury with which Snotlout had spoken to them. Then, Ruffnut looked away, falling back against the tree behind her, looking deflated and thoughtful. Her brother squinted at her for a second.

"So... That was pretty cool right?" He blurted out, smirking at his sister. Her gaze clapped on him, anger burning in her eyes.

"You don't get it, do you? You never get it, Tuff." She retorted. "We've just released a spirit dragon, and now it's gonna come and get us."



Realisation dawned on the brother's face. "Oh... not good, right?"

"Not good," she confirmed. "Not only that, but we've ended someone's time in Valhalla. They're no longer in eternal paradise, they're stuck for eternity on earth, and it's all our fault." She put a hand on her forehead. Thinking about this was beginning to give her a headache. Her brother's features were twisting in realisation. He stared at his feet. "We were so stupid to listen to him..." Ruff groaned.

"What do you think he'd do to us?" Tuffnut ventured to ask, almost childlike.

"I don't know and I don't care." She snapped back, a little too quickly. "Oh, what have we done, Tuff?"

Tuffnut hesitated. He'd never seen his sister quite this distraught. Like him, she usually brushed off any feelings of responsibility with an air of naive childishness. However, he couldn't deny that he too felt as though he was to blame. He could feel what his sister was feeling, and it wasn't good.

Slowly, he took a step towards her, then reached out his hand. His fingers brushed her knuckles, before they wrapped themselves around hers. He held Ruffnut's hand tightly, watching her as she glanced up, disbelief playing on her sharp features. She didn't let go, however. In fact, she held on tightly, creating a link between them.

"Whatever happens, we can take it on together. With our heads. Or something." It was immediately obvious that Tuffnut wasn't the most natural speaker, but his sister always knew what he was trying to say.

"Yeah," Ruff chuckled. "With our heads." Their helmets crashed together.

"Come on," The brother smiled, letting her thin, spidery fingers slip from his grasp. "Let's get back to the village. They'll be wondering where we got to."

And with that, he turned and trudged away through the undergrowth. Ruffnut paused for a second and smiled, before following on.

\_Awh, twin love! I love a bit of twin fluff, don't you? I'm thinking in a situation as serious as this, when they're alone, the twins would come to realise the gravity of what they'd done. Therefore, fluff occurs. Oh well, it's finally done! I had a bit of writer's block with this one, so yeah, sorry. \_

\_Also, I will be writing out the tale that Ruffnut has mentioned and chucking it in as an extra bonus special chapter thingy as a break from the story. Awesome. \_

\_See you soon!\_

\_Okay, next chapter! This one is a little extra thing I had not planned to write, but it begged to be written, and so written it is! This is the story that Ruffnut has mentioned earlier in the story. Enjoy!.\_

\_There was once a town called Tog. It was situated on an island in the middle of the sea. There were no other islands around it. The closest was over a days sailing away. In the town of Tog lived a greedy Viking called Sven. Sven the Greedy was a mean, self-centred man, but was also a coward, never fighting and never trying. He was lazy and arrogant, but he was certainly clever. \_

\_Once day, in Tog, there was a great funeral being held. It was the funeral of the tribe's chief, Borran the Great, who had been mortally wounded in a sea-battle days before. The tribe had won the battle, but had lost their great and wise leader. The town was in mourning, and had buried their chief at the highest point on the island so that he could watch down upon them all and protect them in times to come.

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\_As the final celebrations came to a close in their great hall, Sven the Greedy crept away from the town. He carried just his pick-axe and shovel, and nobody noticed him leave. He climbed up and up towards the top of the island, and there, before him, rose his chief's grave. Sven the Greedy chuckled to himself.\_

"\_I'm sorry, my chief, but you have treasure in there that I need. And seeing as you're not around to stop me, well, I may as well take it for myself!"\_

\_With that, the greedy Viking struck his shovel deep into the dirt. But what he didn't know, what no-body knew was that Borran was not only Great, but also clever. Upon his death-bed, the chief had ordered that a great dragon, the Monstrous Nightmare, be killed and buried alongside him. The creature would become his spirit dragon, protecting his grave and his soul from grave-robbers. As Sven the Greedy dug deeper and deeper into the barrow, he began to find the bones of the dragon. \_

\_There was a blinding light, and the barrow burst open. The dragon's bones rose from the ground, held together by streams of light like silk threads controlling a puppet. The dragon roared, a deafening scream that woke every man, woman and child in the village of Tog. But when it looked down, all it saw was the tools the man had used. Sven himself had run away, like the coward he was. Furious, the spirit dragon took wing and soared down upon the village, attacking with all it's might. Houses burned and men were killed as they tried to defend their village from the dragon's rage. Sven came to realise that he couldn't hide forever. To save the village he loved, he would have to sacrifice himself. \_

\_Sven the Greedy stepped out into the centre of the town. "Here I am, dragon! The grave-robber! Here I stand!" He called. The dragon's head turned and it approached Sven, and evil glint in it's eyes. Sven dropped to his knees before the great dragon. "To save the town I love, I will give you my life." the greedy Viking roared. The dragon nodded, and in one rapid sweep, it's teeth took Sven's head clean off his shoulders. \_

\_Then, the dragon left, returning to it's master's grave. And from then on, in the village, the man was known as Sven the Brave.

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"Snotlout! Put that book down and go to bed!"

Snotlout jumped, sending the book crashing to the floor at his father's feet.

"Uhm, uh, sure, sorry dad..." He stammered, reaching for the book, but Spitelout got there first, snatching it up off the floor and looking at the front cover in disgust.

"You do realise this is a book for \_children\_, don't you?" He scowled, snapping it shut and tapping it against Snotlout's helmet.

"Yeah, sure I do, dad!" Snotlout laughed nervously.

"Then why are you reading it? Warriors don't read stories made to scare children. They aren't real, you know."

"Sure! I knew that, I was just... uh... yeah, tomorrow I'm reading to some kids... somewhere... yeah, that's it..."

"If you're thinking about reading this to those twins, I think this might be a little advanced for them. You might wanna start them on those books the women give their babies in the bath." Spitelout, turned, roaring with mirth and tossing his helmet aside as he headed for his bed upstairs.

"Ha, ha! Good one, dad..." the Jorgenson boy watched his father disappear, then sighed. \_They aren't that bad, dad...\_ he thought to himself. \_Well, one of them isn't, anyway. \_Pinching the light from his candle, he slid the book carefully under his bed and then curled up under the covers.

\_Short, I know, but worth it! Okay, now the chapters might start coming a little more slowly, but I assure you that I'm working on it whenever I have the time! Ciao for now!\_

## 5. Nightmare

\_Why have I got more views on the fourth chapter than the third? Please don't get confused, I updated TWO chapters that morning! If you've missed out on chapter three, you've missed a huge part of the story! Please read it! Okay, onwards!\_

Ruffnut's eyes fluttered open. It took her a second to get her bearings, but soon, she realised she was inside her house, hanging by her feet from the rafters. Her braids dangled limply below her, as did her arms, but her helmet remained stubbornly stuck to her head. All around her was pitch black, shadows looming from the corners of the wooden shack. She looked at the compacted mud floor. Something didn't feel right.

Reaching up, she gripped the bar and swung herself down onto the floor. It was then that it struck her: Tuffnut wasn't there. He wasn't sleeping beside her, as usual, nor was he in his bed. She

could neither see nor hear a sign of him anywhere. She scoured the shadows for him. Feeling a breath of wind on the nape of her neck, she turned, but there was nothing there.

"Tuffnut?" She called, and then again, "Tuff?" When she received no reply, she stepped tentatively into the darkness of the shack. Tuffnut wouldn't be out and about at night. He hated the dark, feared it, even. Ruffnut was bolder, convincing herself that there was nothing there, nothing lurking in the shadows, waiting for her to get close enough...

"Tuffnut, this isn't funny!" Her voice wavered. There was a shiver creeping up her spine. She couldn't shake off the feeling of being watched. The twin was almost afraid for her brother, for where he might have gone. Could he have been swept up by the spirit dragon? Could it have come to snatch them up in the night and punish them for disturbing it's master's grave? She gulped.

A sudden noise drew her attention. She squinted into the darkness. There it was again, a soft moaning sound, low and nauseatingly close. She bit her tongue.

"Who's there?"

Almost as soon as she said it, the sister saw a shape rise from the back of her house, moving closer with a jolting, jerking movement. A shaft of moonlight illuminated it's visage, its hollow, unseeing eyes, its pallid, white colour. A skull. A human skull. She watched with horror as it's whole skeleton came into view, jolting, jerking, coming for her. Atop its head she caught sight of a glint of metal. A helmet. Not just any helmet, but her brother's. She now recognised the flowing, platinum locks cascading down it's chest. There was no doubt about it.

It was Tuffnut.

She backed away as he reached his claw-like hands towards her, retching with fear. Her stomach was turning somersaults inside her, her heart in her mouth. She just wished her head would stop spinning. Coughing out a cry, she stumbled against the door. Her eyes were trapped on him for a second, before she threw the doors open and staggered outside.

Moonlight bathed the square of Berk, the cooking pot hanging over the pile of cinders and wood shining like a beacon in the centre. Ruffnut fell to her knees as she took a deep breath of the outside air, but it felt constricting, suffocating. She choked again. The door behind her creaked. She turned to see his fingers clasping the wood. Jumping to her feet, Ruffnut ran towards the next house, Snotlout's, but was greeted by the unforgiving sight of his skeleton, walking too, jerking out of the doorway. All around her, their bones glinting, the villagers of Berk converged upon her. Bones everywhere. Every one of them a walking carcass. She retched again.

Running for the centre of the square, she couldn't get their heinous gaze from her mind. It was as though it was infecting her, taking over her mind. Hands on her shoulders. She spun around. Tuffnut's fleshless face stared into hers. She stumbled back, but fell, crashing to the ground. He stood over her, terrifying. She struggled as his hands ceased her neck, crying out in fear and pain. She tossed

and turned, but it was no use. Her vision was failing. Couldn't breathe. Couldn't see. She could see colours dancing in front of his face, his cold, dead eyes. Blackness falling...

Falling...

\_Thud! \_Ruffnut jolted awake as she crashed to the floor. She let out a loud groan, opening her eyes. Her head felt as though it was splitting open. She was shaking all over, heaving for breath, her skin plastered in a layer of clammy sweat. Above her, the ceiling was swimming, making her feel nauseous. Letting out another groan, she let her eyes slide closed again and gulped.

"You okay, sis?" Tuffnut's voice rang out, impossibly loud, and she started, her eyes flying open and fixing upon her brother's face. Her dream came back to her in a second, and she leapt to her feet, a decision that she instantly regretted as she swooned and fell back against the door.

"Whoa, not cool..." She groaned. "Do you have to speak so loud?"

"Oh, sorry." Her brother swung down from the rafter, slowly, expertly, and his feet touched the floor almost silently. "You don't look that great, Ruff."

"Well, I just fell out of bed. Do you think I'd look perfect?" She tried to hide behind a barrage of sarcasm.

"Ruffnut, I'm not stupid." He pouted.

"That's debatable"

"I was watching you for a good five minutes before you woke up."

"Watching me sleep, not creepy at all."

"Can you just stop?" Tuffnut rounded on her. "You were having a nightmare. I know you were. You can't hide it from me."

"Yeah, so what?" Ruffnut tried to keep herself together, but she could feel the pieces slipping out of her grasp.

"What was it about?"

"You were a skeleton who tried to kill me, and so was everyone else in the village. I think you succeeded. It was... horrible" Ruff gulped.

"Sounds awesome to me! Was I a good skeleton? Did I look good?"

Ruffnut pulled a face, silencing her brother, before she gave a choked cough and croaked, "I need some air." Spinning around, the sister once again threw the doors open and stalked out into the night.

Everything looked as it had in her dream. The bright moonlight, the cooking pot in the square's centre, all of the houses. Just no

skeletons. She breathed in the air deeply, clearing her head, finally. She no longer felt ill, just shaken. All of a sudden, her brother was at her side, smiling at her. Suddenly, he didn't seem so irritating. In fact, she was glad to have him there beside her. It helped her relax. Looking up, she watched the sparkling stars in the sky, a gaze that her brother soon followed. Nothing seemed quite so scary anymore...

\_mnnnhuuuugh...\_

The twins both became ridged, the hair on the back of their necks standing up.

"What... was... \_that\_...?"

\_I'm gonna stop there for now. Exiting! I've been wanting to write that dream sequence for forever, but I haven't got a chance until now! Again, if you missed out on chapter 3, where the thing escaped from the barrow and Snotlout got upset, please go and read it before you continue! I don't want anyone to miss out. \_

\_Originally, this was going to be one with the next chapter, but it got to two full pages and I thought "I need to stop this here, dude!" So there you go. Enjoy!\_

## 6. Night Turns to Day

\_Okay, so I've got some reviews to answer, so bear with me. If you haven't reviewed, you don't have to read these, so don't worry. Just go straight on to the story!\_

\_Hiccupisnotuseless: Thanks for reviewing... 3 times :P I'm glad you're enjoying it, and I'm trying to show off a different side to the characters because what's happening is very serious. I'd also like to see Snotlout make his dad eat his words, but I don't think he would. Oh well!\_

\_Woflie-V: Don't worry, I can see that it's you who reviewed! Thanks for your kind words, they're very encouraging! I agree that Ruffnut is certainly portrayed as being smarter in the shorts and the film, and so is Tuffnut, to an extent, but to keep their target audience entertained there has to be some slapstick humour in the series. Anyway, never mind, we can just see it here instead!\_

\_Jesusfreak: I put it in! I did!\_

\_Guest: I did! I did!\_

\_OMA001: You will find out soon, and yes! How interesting...\_

\_midnightwolfe2302: I'm really glad you enjoyed it, and I hope you find the story you started. If you haven't read on, I promise you, it's worth it!\_

\_Okay, we can do the story now.\_

There it was again, that sickening, deadly sound. Tuffnut grabbed his sister's arm, heart hammering in his chest, beginning to tremble. He

already hated the dark. This was making it worse.

"Get off me, idiot!" Ruffnut scowled, trying to pry his hands away, but eventually gave up. She rolled her eyes. "You're ridiculous."

"But...it could be the spirit dragon! C-coming to g-get us! It'll bite off our heads, Ruff! And, I mean, I'm not saying that's not awesome, cos it is, I'd just like it to do it to s-someone else!"

"You're babbling. Keep your mouth shut and follow me."

Together, the twins stalked in the direction of the sound. It seemed to be coming from between their house and the building beside it. Tuffnut swore he could see something in the darkness, moving, but when he looked closer, he saw that it was just a bush. They heard it again, getting louder, and both froze in their tracks. Exchanging fearful looks, the sister left Tuffnut's side as she ventured ever closer, trying to find out where the noise was coming from.

"Sis, what are you doing?" He hissed, backing away. "Come back!" Looking from side to side, he found himself alone in the darkness. Panic was setting in. He was okay with the dark if someone was there, that someone always being his sister. Now she was gone, he felt isolated and vulnerable.

"Sis...?" He whined, gulping.

"Tuff! Come and look at this!" Came a cry, making him start. He could vaguely make out her form standing beside Snotlout's shack. On tiptoe, he hurried over to her.

"What have you-" \_smack\_. Her fist connected painfully with his forehead, and he fell, sprawled on his back, arms and legs in the air.

"You idiot," his sister growled. "That sound we heard? Look in here. It's Snotlout snoring!" With a snort of disgust, she turned and trudged away, taking the time to stand on her brother's stomach as she did so. His choked grunt of pain made her smile. \_Serves you right.\_

Snotlout gave his companion a disgruntled look. The plump Viking, however, didn't seem to notice as he insightfully recounted his voyage on Meatlug the previous day and all the different cloud formations they had seen.

Through the mundane haze, Snotlout spotted movement out of the corner of his eye. Stifling a yawn, he looked up, and was greeted by the sight of one of the twins leaving the house. Although at this distance, it was impossible to tell them apart by looks alone, he could tell by the way he walked that it was the male twin. A grin spread across his face. This was way more interesting than Fishlegs' cloud formations.

"Hey, Tuffnut! You're up late!" He shouted. Tuff obligingly wandered over towards them, and Fishlegs finally stopped talking, finding that he'd lost his audience. As he got closer, the two Vikings could see that their friend was looking a little worse for wear. His eyelids

drooped and there were bags under his eyes. As he stopped in front of them, he yawned widely.

"Hey guys," He chimed in his usual manner.

"Uh, hey. You don't look like you slept very well," Fishlegs noted. The twin snorted.

"Yeah, my stupid sister kept me awake last night. If you think I look bad, you should see her."

Fishlegs' brow creased. "Is she alright?"

"I think so. Don't really care, to be honest."

"What happened, then?"

"Oh, she had this stupid nightmare thingy. Said something about we were all 'skeletons trying to kill her' or something."

"Sounds scary to me..." Fishlegs muttered.

"Hah! Sounds awesome to me! I would've loved that dream," Tuffnut laughed, turning around. His chortling stopped as soon as he caught sight of his sister, heading their way. "Oh! Uh, don't say anything to her! She'll kill me..."

Ruffnut stood beside her twin, trying to rub the sleep out of her eyes. Tuff straightened up, searching for a place to look where she wouldn't see his face. The sister hadn't yet had a chance to splash some water over her face, and so she still wasn't fully awake. Dropping her hands, she found them all staring at her.

"What?" She snapped. "Never seen me in the morning before?"

"You look awful, Ruff. Are you okay?" Fishlegs asked, ever caring. Tuffnut and Snotlout exchanged looks of worry, afraid that Fishlegs would spill the beans.

"I'm fine!" She croaked, surprised by the gesture. She glanced at her brother, who was trying to hide the guilty look on his face by turning away. Her brows came together in confusion.

"Only... Tuffnut said you had a bad dream..."

The looks on both of the twins' faces were priceless. The surprise turning to fury on the sister's, the shock turning to fear on her brother's. Fishlegs turned a delicate shade of pink, squeaking and holding his mouth closed. Only Snotlout carried on grinning, awaiting some early morning violence from Berk's very own comedy duo.

"Oh yeah? What else did he tell you?" Ruffnut's voice was deadly and low.

Snotlout couldn't resist. "That it was about skeletons trying to kill you or something. Sounds like it was pretty great!"

Tuffnut was backing away slowly from his sister as she stared daggers at him. She bared her teeth.



"You think this is funny?! You think this is all a big joke?!" She howled, taking a few paces towards him. He put up his hands in defence.

"I'm sorry! It just... sort of... came out! Of my mouth! I couldn't stop it!"

"Oh, there'll be something else coming out of your mouth in a minute! Blood!"

\_Aaah! Twins fight again! Only, this one's serious! Well, would you want your sibling to tell all your friends if you had a bad dream and got really scared? Ruffnut certainly wouldn't!\_

## 7. Kiss and Make Up

\_Okay, twin fight, coming up! Please don't forget to R+R, I love your feedback. It keeps me writing! Also, just to let you know, on Friday (4th April) I shall be leaving for a holiday to Malta, so I don't yet know whether or not I will have Wifi, nor do I know, if I do, how well it will work. Therefore, you may be waiting for a week and then get 5 or 6 chapters at once! So do bear with me, I'm sorry if I don't!\_

Tuffnut's back was against a wall. He had nowhere to run. Turning to face his sister, he gave her a pleading look, but it did nothing. Her first punch landed in his stomach, and he crumpled to the ground, trying to crawl away.

"You little \_runt\_! I can't \_believe \_you!" She cried furiously. Leaping upon him, she began to rain blows down upon him, on his head, his stomach, and anywhere she could reach. Fire burned in her eyes. Driven mad with rage, Ruffnut clawed her brother's arms, slapped his skin, did anything she could.

It didn't hurt. Not really, anyway. Tuffnut was used to fighting with his sister, and his body was used to the beating. No, it wasn't that that hurt. It was her anger. Her own pain was hurting him. In a brief respite, he looked up, met her eyes. She glared at him, hateful, and went to smack him again. He grabbed her wrist, then snatched the other. Locked in a power struggle, the twins stared one another down. Ruffnut's wrist broke away. Her boot came up, knocking him in the knee-cap. He yelped, putting his free hand in her face, trying to dissuade her from continuing.

Blind fury was consuming her. It had eaten up every ounce of reason she had left in her. Like a wild animal, she lay blows everywhere she could reach. But she could feel it ebbing away. Her strength was fading away with the mindless anger in her mind. Suddenly, she felt strong hands on her upper arms, dragging her away, holding her back, though she no longer needed to be held. She looked down at her brother, her face unreadable. Fishlegs stood on one side, clasping her arm, and Snotlout stared at her from the other.

"Whoa, Ruff. That was... ferocious," Snotlout commented, giving her a look of confusion.

"Yeah..." Fishlegs simpered. "There's no need to be that angry..."

Ruffnut bared her teeth. "There's every reason," she snapped, then tugged her arms from their collective grasp and stalked away. Tuffnut stared after his sister as the others gathered around and Snotlout offered a hand.

"You okay?" Fishlegs asked.

"Yeah, fine..." He muttered. "Geez, what is it with her? She's been acting really weird since..." He stopped himself, catching Snotlout's warning glare. "...since we got thrown off in the woods!" He finished simply.

"Hmm, maybe she knocked her head," Fishlegs stroked his chin. "Should one of us go after her?"

"I'll go. She's my sister."

"Sure she won't kill you again?"

"Nah, she's all killed out. Don't worry, I'll see you guys later." And with that, Tuffnut strode off, an arm wrapped around his stomach.

He found her sitting on the cliff edge behind their house, staring out over the docks, to the sea. She had a longing, guilty look in her eyes.

"Need a push?" Tuff sniffed, sitting down gingerly beside her. She looked at him sideways, not overly sure whether he was serious.

"Can if you want," She finally replied. "I probably deserve it by now."

"Okay that was not the answer I was expecting..." The brother watched his sister rub her forehead. She looked exhausted, like she could just go to sleep right then and there. In a way, he felt the same.

"I'm sorry, Tuff..." The next thing she said was even more surprising than the last. He openly gawked at her as she gazed out over the ocean. "We need to tell someone, Tuff. This can't go on any longer. It's tearing us apart."

"It happened yesterday!"

"Yeah, and we've already had major nightmares and massive fights because of it. If we let it go on, we might just... fall apart. And as weird as it sounds, I wouldn't want that. You're way too much fun to beat up."

"Yeah. And we can't fly Barf and Belch separately." Tuffnut added.

"Exactly. I'm going to tell Hiccup. I can't stand this any longer."

"Wait, wait, wait. What about what Snotlout said? He'll make us wish we'd never been born!"

Ruffnut stood up slowly, offering him a hand. "Well, then, you distract him, and I'll go see Hiccup. Simple. Just tell him you can't find me or something. I'm sure he won't mind helping look for me."

"Oh, yeah, good idea," He replied, taking her hand and hauling himself upright. There was a stab of pain in his ribs, and he doubled over slightly, before managing to straighten up. His sister looked away guiltily.

"Go on, go get Snotlout out of the way." She muttered, and he smiled.

"Sure will."

She approached the chiefs door, behind which, Hiccup and Toothless were blissfully unaware of the chaos that had happened in the square below. She knocked on the door cautiously, turning around. There was no-one down there. Sighing, she turned back as the door slid open.

"Ruffnut? What are you doing here? Is everything okay?" Hiccup glanced around, curious. Inside, Ruffnut could see Toothless crawling slowly towards the door. "Where's Tuffnut?"

"He's off with Snotlout and Fishlegs, I think." She replied nonchalantly. "Hiccup... can I talk to you? Inside? Please?"

Hiccup stood back from the door, a soft smile on his face. "Sure, come on in. What's the problem?"

\_Woo, I did it! This one isn't proof read, so R+R if you spot a mistake anywhere, please! I'll correct any glaring mistakes before I go to Malta. Much love!\_

## 8. Ancestor's Grave

\_Wow! Malta is awesome, but I'm kinda tired in the evenings, so writing isn't too easy. But, I'm not going to dwell on it too long, because you're all wondering how Hiccup will take the news of what the twins and Snotlout got up to out there and I've already kept you waiting long enough, so let's begin!\_

"You... and Snotlout... did \_what?\_" Hiccup fumed, his face turning pale and his hands clasped in fists by his sides. Ruffnut wouldn't look at him, biting her lip.

"We dug up a grave. Well, they did." She looked from the ceiling to the floor, shrugging her shoulders like she didn't care. "I didn't do any digging."

Hiccups hand flew up to his forehead and he groaned. "This is bad. Really, really bad..." He flopped down into his father's chair, rubbing his head tenderly. Ruffnut looked at him, finally, and couldn't help but think just how... right he looked, sitting in that great, oaken throne. Toothless lifted his head, placing his muzzle against his boy's fingers that clasped the arm of his chair, and he lifted his hand enough to slide it up his dragon's nose. The Night Fury hummed softly.

"Hiccup, I..." Ruff started, her brow creasing.

"No, don't say anything. Just let me think." Hiccup scowled darkly into his lap, thoughts dashing before his eyes. The thought of what they'd done very nearly made him ill with anger. His cheeks flushed pink. "Do you have any idea what you've done?" He looked up at her, his eyes blazing. She couldn't look away, but she couldn't find the words to say. Her mouth just opened and closed uselessly. "You don't, do you?"

The chief's son leapt to his feet. Toothless jolted back, alarmed at the ferocity his rider was showing as he glared hatefully at the teen before him. Hiccup just couldn't suppress his rage. "You've dug up a grave. Not just any grave, by the sounds of it, but the grave of one of my ancestors. A previous chief of the tribe. One of my forefathers was resting there in eternal slumber and you woke him!" Hiccup took a dangerous step towards Ruffnut, trembling with barely-contained anger, looking as though he was about to strike her. Which, in his heart of hearts, he could not pretend that he didn't want to. Advancing on her still, so that she began to back away, he continued, "What if that was my father? Would you dig his grave up? Or, what if it was mine? Would you disturb my eternal slumber just for some petty little get-rich-quick scheme?"

Her back hit the door. "Hiccup, please..." She pleaded, "You're... kinda scaring me..."

Toothless appeared by his side, his constant presence the reason Hiccup knew he needed to stop. He nudged the boy in his stomach. Slowly, after staring her down for some time, Hiccup's shoulders finally relaxed. He stepped back, his fists uncurled, and he finally realised how painfully his nails had been digging into his palms. His long, thin fingers flexed. He reached up to massage his jaw, which had been clenched so tightly that it had almost locked. Toothless crooned softly, nudging his hip.

"No, bud, it's okay. I'm fine." He sighed softly, reaching out and touching him reassuringly. He turned to Ruffnut, who was just staring at him. Her eyes were clouded with emotions, fear and anxiety as what she'd done dawned on her, sadness and regret that she'd caused Hiccup such distress. Her lips were pursed in a vain attempt to conceal her feelings. He couldn't quite tell in the dim light, but her eyes could possibly be filling with tears. He felt, deep inside, a pang of regret.

"Sorry, Ruff, I didn't mean to lose my temper like that. Look, whatever happens, we can fix it..."

She uttered a strange, strangled noise that sounded something like "no...", then, with a cough, she spun around, threw the doors open wide and dashed out. She took the steps two at a time, then sprinted across the square and down the path, her long, ungainly strides eating up the ground. Hiccup ran down after her, calling her name, but stopped at the bottom of the steps when he realised it was a futile effort.

The noise attracted the attention of Tuffnut, who had been wandering aimlessly around the square with Snotlout, pretending to search for his sister. Snotlout scowled at the boy beside him, who turned

sheepishly his way.

"What was your sister doing with Hiccup, mud-brain?" The question was low, dangerous.

Tuffnut shrank away. "I-I have absolutely no idea! Definitely not telling him about the stuff in the forest! No, not at all!" He chuckled nervously. With a hump, the Jorgenson boy strode away, leaving his friend at liberty. The twin instantly ran over to where Hiccup was stood, grabbing his shoulder. "Hiccup! What's going on?"

"I don't know, Tuff. I was just... I lost my temper with her and now she's run off..."

"Oh yeah," The brother mused, "She does that sometimes. If she gets upset, she just runs off. Always has. That's if she doesn't pound you instead."

"But... It's kinda my fault. I knew I shouldn't have lost my cool. It wasn't really her fault, I mean, she didn't even do any digging, did she?"

"What? Oh." Tuffnut finally caught on. Even he couldn't remember why his sister had been talking with the chief's son. "Nope. She wouldn't touch it."

"I just got so angry. That's my ancestor you guys dug up."

"Oh, really? Whoops, sorry Hiccup..." Tuffnut looked genuinely apologetic, if a little naive. "I didn't know."

"It's fine. And you were just doing what Snotlout told you."

"Uh, yeah. He didn't say he'd give us any treasure, he just asked us to help him out. I had no idea it would be some crazy burial thing, and half of the time, I wasn't even listening to him. He's so boring when he goes off on one. Geez..."

"Right." Hiccup thrust his shoulders back and stared the other teen straight in the eyes. "You're not excused for this. There will be a punishment. But for now, I need to speak with your sister and get everything out of her. I can't let her go on feeling this way, nor can I let this go un-noticed."

"Oh, man. I hate punishments..." Tuffnut muttered, kicking the dirt. Hiccup gave him a sharp look. "What?"

"Where would your sister have gone? Can you take me to her?"

Tuffnut met Hiccups eyes and slowly nodded. "Yeah, I think I know where she might have gone. I can take you there, just follow me."

\_Does this sound a bit weird to you? Cos it does to me. Anyway, I had to drag this out a little because the next chapter needs to be a chapter on its own, and I feel like it could be quite long. Hope you're still enjoying this! Also, I've finally got my idea for the next thing I'm going to write, and it may contain a few more characters than just the twins! Although, obviously, it does start

with them. Okay, that's all for now. Stay tuned!\_

## 9. Dockside

\_Next, next, next! I hope you're really enjoying this and I really appreciate all the reviews I have from this. Just don't forget to R+R for me! Thanks.\_

Tuffnut was thinking hard as he and the red-haired boy descended towards the docks. Hiccup could see just how hard the twin was thinking by the glassy look in his eyes and the way his brow was so deeply furrowed.

"What are you thinking about?" He asked softly, looking curiously at the other teen.

"I dunno..." Tuff took a moment to gather his thoughts. "She doesn't do this. Not this often, anyway. I don't know what's gotten into her."

Hiccup felt his heart flutter a little with pity. "Maybe it's just because... she's growing up, Tuff. That happens sometimes, you know. People grow up. They change. You will too, some day."

"But, Hiccup... how much will she change? Because, if I'm honest... I don't think I want to lose her." Tuffnut looked down at the floor, determined not to meet Hiccup's eyes.

"That's normal, Tuff. You two have been together since you were born. But, I think the only thing you can do is just be yourself. You and her are growing up and maturing. She's just... doing it faster than you are. Just make sure you guys can still enjoy the things you usually enjoy and you'll still be... together." Hiccup awkwardly patted the brother's shoulder. He felt as though he had to do something to placate him before the inevitable happened and he was left behind as his sister matured. However, Tuffnut gave a chirpy laugh.

"Where do you learn all this stuff? It's almost impressive!" He gave Hiccup a soft punch to the arm, obviously feeling much better. "Don't tell her I said anything like that. I might have to drown you off the docks. Just saying..."

"Uh, yeah, okay..." Trying to ignore the threat, Hiccup looked up to see where they were. "Talking of the docks, look where we are!"

"Oh yeah. There she is, over there. I knew she would be" Tuff smirked, looking out across the docks. They could see Ruffnut perched on the end of a platform, dangling her feet near the water. Her body was silhouetted against the sun, glinting off the water like a million shining scales. Hiccup looked at the slouch in her shoulders and felt a pang of regret.

"So... what now?" The brother asked his companion. Hiccup stroked his chin thoughtfully.

"You said you didn't wanna lose her, right?"

"I thought I told you not to say that?" Tuffnut warned,

scowling.

"No, no, listen." Hiccups hands flew up. "if you don't wanna lose her, then you need to go and talk to her. You need to let her know that you're there for her, even when she's upset."

"You mean, when she's no fun?"

"Yeah, when she's no fun. Because if you're there then, she'll be there when she is fun, if that makes sense. Which I imagine it doesn't."

"Nope," Tuff shrugged, "But if you say so, I will."

Slowly, he approached his sister, treading as quietly as possible down the decking of the pontoon, although, for Tuffnut, 'quietly' was about as loud as you could walk without stamping. However, Ruffnut was resolutely pretending to ignore him, facing away from him and scowling, her cheek resting on her clenched fist so that she looked even meaner. Tuffnut stopped behind his sister and looked down at her, but when she continued to ignore him, he felt the need to announce his presence. The brother lifted his hand to his lips and cleared his throat loudly.

"Go away." Ruffnut drawled.

"No," her brother replied, "I won't."

She huffed loudly. "What do you want?" There was a certain venom in her wavering tone.

He kicked her lightly in the rear. "Move your fat butt and I'll tell you."

She shuffled aside slightly to make room for him, still determined not to look at her brother. Tuffnut cast a glance over his shoulder and caught Hiccup's eye. The chief's son gave him a thumbs-up and smiled in encouragement. Turning back, Tuff flopped down beside her and folded his arms across his chest, staring into the dark water that writhed beneath his feet. For a while, the twins sat beside one another, not talking. Finally, the sister turned to her brother, her nose wrinkled slightly.

"So, why are you here?" Her voice was flat and scathing.

"To check on you. Why else?"

"Because Hiccup told you to. You think I'm stupid? I can see him back there." She glared at him, colour flushing her cheeks. "What do you care how I feel? You've never cared! Why should you start now?"

That stung. Tuffnut screwed up his face and turned away, containing the urge to smack her into the ocean. Instead, he turned back to face her, teeth gritted, and scowled, "Because you're being weird, and I don't like it. Next thing I know, you could not liking breaking stuff or blowing things up, or you could end up all mushy like Astrid."

"I could blow you up. That would be fun," she replied drily, a pathetic come-back, which Tuffnut was quick to pick up on as he pulled a face and scoffed. His sister snorted, and both twins began

to laugh with one another again. The brother moved his hand over the top of Ruffnut's, creating a link between them once again. But, as soon as the bond was created, it was destroyed as he cuffed her around the shoulder. She retaliated with a sharp smack tot he shoulder, and in a second the siblings had launched themselves into a full-blown play-fight.

Hiccup watched as the twins displayed their usual boisterously vicious streak and found himself smiling slightly. Somehow, the weight of responsibility seemed to slip off his shoulders, even for a second, as he watched her mood improve.

Finally, Tuffnut backed away from his grinning twin, wary of a rebounded attack, but none came as his sister straightened up and put her hands on her hips.

"Okay..." He started, raising an eyebrow. "Will you come with me and show Hiccup the mound?"

The question seemed to visibly age his sister, her smile falling and her eyes falling away from his. "I guess so... yeah." She muttered, meeting his gaze again.

"It's okay, Ruffnut." Hiccup's voice behind him made Tuffnut start and spin around. The chief's son approached her slowly and reached up to place a hand on her shoulder. "I think we can fix this, but you have to help us. Will you?"

She took a second, and then smiled. "Sure."

\_Geez, this chapter doesn't seem right at all. Anyway, I'm having a little trouble with this story, but to keep my interest up I've started a new one. Hopefully, I won't take too long to get this one finished. Anyone got any requests for one-shots? I feel like I need to write about something other than the twins, seeing as that's all I ever write about (however, I could justify this by bringing up the fact that others only ever seem to write about Hiccup and Astrid or Ruffnut in a relationship with one of the other guys, which personally I don't like to read because it seems awkward. Long brackets!) \_

## 10. The Dragon

\_Okay, review reply time! After that, we will finally find out just what was inside that Barrow! Isn't this exiting?!\_

\_Guest: Hey, yeah, I guess that would be cool! Unfortunately, whatever I do, that wouldn't fit in with what I've got planned for the story, but great idea!\_

\_Guest/Jesusfreak: (I'm guessing this is the review you're talking about. If not, I'm sorry!) Was it spooky? Great! I love it when it's spooky!\_

\_Guest: I hope Hiccup sufficiently lost it for you!\_

\_Hiccupisnotuseless: Well, you just read it! I've read your story, just give me some time and I'll get around to reviewing



it\_

\_Tasermon's Partner: I have sent you a message already\_

Ruffnut was unusually quiet on the way to the barrow, her arms folded across her chest and her head hanging slightly. Her brother, on the other hand, was clasping Belch's horns tightly, grinning and allowing the wind to whip tears up in his eyes. His sister kept throwing sideways glances at Hiccup, still acutely aware that she wasn't off the hook yet and that the boy was still angry at her, even if it was only a little.

Toothless purred softly at his rider as he gazed at the Zippleback and its riders. He reached out and ran his hand over the dragon's forehead, trying to reassure him.

"I'm fine, Toothless. I just feel bad about losing my cool with Ruff. I don't think she meant to upset me personally, but it just felt like a huge punch in the chest. Especially since that's one of my ancestors in that grave. They've done something utterly stupid! I mean, I don't think they don't deserve everything that's coming to them. Just you wait 'till my father hears about this..." He sighed and patted his dragon's neck. Toothless turned his head to watch his rider. "I know, bud, this isn't like me at all. I still feel bad that they're going to get in trouble, believe me. I just wish Snotlout wasn't so up his own backside sometimes! And I wish the twins weren't so easily led! Tuffnut has no idea of the gravity of what he's done. At least his sister sort of gets it..."

The Night Fury growled softly, blinking as if he understood every word. His rider gave him a smile. "Thanks, bud. You always make me feel better."

Below them, the forest rushed by in a blur. Hiccup watched as the tall, straight pines gave way to smaller, denser, deciduous trees; oaks, beeches, hazels and birches. There were these tiny patches in the forests of Berk and around the archipelagos where tiny copses of hard-woods gathered and bunched together in the shadows of the taller, broader pines. Hiccup loved the way the branches of these trees twisted and stretched in their winding way. They almost looked like fingers, clutching at the sky, or like dragon's claws scratching the clouds.

Hiccup felt Toothless heave below him and tilt lazily to the right, and so he adjusted the tail accordingly. They swept back over the towering conifers that reached up towards them, their clusters of boughs spreading out invitingly below them.

"It's over here!" The call came back. Hiccup looked up to see Tuffnut peering back over his shoulder and pointing below. The dragons swooped down, avoiding the scratching pine branches, and landed in what seemed like a horror story.

The whole barrow had been obliterated, clumps of earth thrown in every direction. Where there was once grass, there now lay a top layer of peaty soil. They could see roots and grasses tossed into the trees around them, and there they now hung in miserable tendrils from the black wood. There was no barrow left at all. Barely even a mention remained, a slight hint of a wall where the great mound once stood. Strangely enough, however, there was no sign of any blackened

wood or heavy stone, and there was certainly no bones.

"No bones..." Hiccup breathed, sliding down from his saddle and pacing thoughtfully through the sea of mud, if you could call it pacing. Wading would be a more accurate term. He studied the ground carefully, the twins close behind him, staring about themselves as though deeply unsettled by something. "There are no bones anywhere. When you bury someone, even if you burn them, you get remnants of bones left behind. Teeth, blackened ribs, anything. But there's nothing here!"

"Does it matter?" Tuffnut asked, poking his head over Hiccup's shoulder. His sister hugged her arms tightly to her chest, staring at the ground with an odd expression on her face.

"Yeah. We all know what this is. There's nothing else it could be." she droned, gulping.

"Oh, I think there is..." The chief's son breathed. Both twins looked at him, askance, and followed his gaze.

Their faces dropped with horror. In the forest, they could quite clearly make out two huge, orb-like eyes, glowing like pearls in the undergrowth. Tuffnut made a strangled noise of fear, backing away with the others as the eyes became larger and closer. The three teens could quite easily be forgiven for soiling themselves as the huge creature loomed out of the trees. Luckily, however, they did not.

The dragon was as tall on all fours as Hookfang was long, and its wings that spread out behind it as wide as two of Toothless's. Its scales shone a brilliant white colour, glowing almost as brightly as the sunlight. They could see all of its skeleton, skin wrapped around it tightly like the skin of a drum, taut and fluid as it moved. Its claws looked like knife blades, its rumbling growl like thunder. The teens slowly backed away as its heavy footsteps came closer and closer. The foul stench made them gag.

"What is that thing?" Tuffnut breathed, heart in his mouth, and yet, he already felt as though he knew the answer. The others simply cast him a glance over their shoulders, stumbling back over the rough ground. Hiccup was staring at the dragon in awe.

"I think you'll find, Tuffnut, that that dragon is what was inside that barrow..." He muttered with a mixture of excitement and dread.

"The spirit dragon!" Ruffnut cried. "The story was true! It's come to eat us!" Her panic was echoed by her brother as they both turned and ran back towards their dragon. Hiccup followed suit, running for Toothless as the great, white dragon's chest began to glow a hideous blue.

"Get down!" He cried, reaching forward and grabbing the shirts of his companions, pulling them all down to the ground before a super-heated jet of electric blue flame flashed over their heads. Hiccup felt his hair singeing. The heat was simply staggering.

"Toothless!" He screamed as the dragon paused for breath, "Plasma Blast!" His call was answered with a high-pitched scream, followed by

a bright flash of fire as the Night Fury's blast hit the beast and knocked it back. It uttered a high pitched scream and disappeared into the forest once again, moving with alarming speed for its size.

Three pairs of eyes followed it and three shaken teens sat up nervously. Their dragons were by their sides in an instant, crooning and checking their riders health.

"That... that was the spirit dragon...?" Ruffnut whispered, trembling.

"I don't think that was a spirit dragon. In fact, I think its a lot easier to explain." Hiccup replied softly, his hands on his dragon's nose and a thoughtful look on his face.

"What do you mean?" She breathed.

"This is gonna sound crazy, and I'm gonna need Fishlegs' help with this, but just hear me out..."

\_What has Hiccup got to say to the others? Oh, the excitement! My writing black has dissolved with this awesomeness. Expect more soon! Don't forget to R+R!\_

## 11. Around The Fire

\_Thanks to all of my readers who were kind enough to review my stories. I have exiting news! If you love my writing, please go to my brand new blog on Tumblr to get the latest updates and previews of my next story, Alone!\_

\_ â†• here it is!\_

"So, you're saying it wasn't a spirit dragon after all?" Ruffnut's hand was supporting her chin as she slumped at the table, looking slightly bored of being so confused. She hated it when Fishlegs and Hiccup began to talk in riddles about new species of dragons. Beside her, her brother looked equally as lost and disgruntled, if a little more ruffled. His hair was sticking up at odd angles and lines had formed under his eyes. She cast a sideways glance at him, realising he was almost asleep on his feet.

"Well, yes, that's exactly what we've been saying. What you guys found is certainly not a spirit dragon. They don't exist!" Fishlegs scoffed, pouring all of his attention into the book of dragons. He was hunched over on the opposite side of the table, the light from the feeble fire behind them glinting off the fur of his yak-skin coat, illuminating him in a halo of light. Ruffnut scowled darkly at the tone of his answer, turning to her brother to make a sarcastic comment and finding his head slowly sliding off the hand he was using to support it, fast asleep. She smirked smugly, awaiting the inevitable.

Tuffnut's head fell straight down and hit the table with an almighty smack, the boy himself jolting awake with a grunt and the other two teens starting at the loud sound. Ruffnut laughed so hard, she doubled up and almost fall backwards off the bench. She thumped the table with her fist and snorted loudly, looking up at her brother's

scowl through a haze of tears. Having had enough, Tuffnut deftly gave her a rough shove back onto the floor, huffing moodily as she continued to chortle.

Hiccup was on the other side of the room, stroking his chin thoughtfully. He wandered slowly over to where Fishlegs was still flipping rapidly through the pages of the book.

"Anything yet?" He asked softly. The boy shook his head.

"It... might possibly be a new species," he muttered, scanning a page.

"Or a spirit dragon!" Ruffnut called out, clambering back up into her seat. Both boys gave her unimpressed looks, silencing her. She looked over at her brother, who was now face down on the hard wooden table, snoring quietly. "Hey, do you guys think Tuff and I could go? We didn't sleep that well last night and... well, you can probably see that we're pretty tired..."

Hiccup looked up from the book and smiled. "Sure," He said gently, "Go ahead. We'll see you in the morning."

"Wait..." Fishlegs' finger snapped to the centre of his latest page, stopping Ruff dead as she was about to prod her brother awake. Hiccup looked over at him. "Look! Look at this one! Pale, pearly eyes, white scales, bony body... this one fits your description!" Even Tuffnut was now awake and staring at the plump Viking. "Look, right here!" Hiccup followed his finger. Sure enough, the illustration closely resembled the dragon that had come so close to killing them that day. His breath caught in his throat. It even described perfectly the columns of electric blue fire that it breathed.

"That's it..." He whispered. "It's called a Burrow Barrow."

Tuffnut snorted. "That's a stupid name."

"Yeah," His sister backed him up, "I thought it would be way more ferocious than that."

Hiccup shot them a look to silence them. "Apparently it gets its name from its habit of burying itself and sleeping for... centuries..." The chief's son's voice trailed away. "It wasn't a grave... it was a Burrow Barrow barrow..."

"Mhm!" Fishlegs grinned proudly. "You guys have caught sight of one of the most rarely seen dragons of the archipelagos. It says here that they're much more comment than they seem, but they stay so well hidden in their burrows that we never really see them. This is awesome!"

"It's not awesome, Fishlegs. This thing is after us, I'm sure of it. If it gets to Berk..."

"What are you guys doing up?" The door suddenly crashed back on its hinges, and a figure was silhouetted against the moonlight. Fairly tall and slim, she straightened up and strode into the firelight, her trusty battle-axe clasped in her hand. The four teens looked like startled rats in a nest, unsure whether to run or to stay and face the intruder.

"Oh, h-hey Astrid!" Hiccup greeted nervously. "Wh-what are you doing here? If I'd known you were coming I would have made a seat..."

"The question is, what are all you guys doing here?" Her eyes were narrowed to suspicious slits as she pointed the weapon offensively at the group leader. Her other hand rose to her hip. She was expecting an answer.

When none came, and the group began to look sheepishly between one another, she simply strode across the room and stood over Fishlegs, reading the information on the pages of the book spread out in front of him. He quickly shuffled aside to make her a seat, but the blonde wouldn't take it. She glared at him from the corners of her eyes.

"What are you all reading about the Burrow Barrow for?" She snorted incredulously. "No-one's seen one of those since Stoick became chief. They all say they're too scared of him to come back since he lopped one's head off."

"Okay, one, I'm quite willing to believe that, and two, what you just said? That's not strictly true..." Hiccup decided that, however much trouble and hurt it might put him in, coming clean to Astrid was much better than to try to keep her in the dark and let her find out later.

"Yeah, I know, it's a load of rubbish." She snorted, startling them. "Of course they're not afraid of Stoick, he loves dragons as much as we do."

Hiccup squirmed slightly as she pushed her long, blonde fringe back behind her ear. "No, it's the other thing you said, about no-one seeing one... well..." He swallowed, meeting her rapidly narrowing eyes. "We have..."

"What?!" She cried, lifting her axe once again. "Where? When?"

"We saw one. In the forest. This afternoon." He answered slowly and quietly, his hands up by his chest in surrender. Astrid took a second to contemplate this. She remained silent for a good few seconds, lips pursed, thinking of her next move.

"How?" She hissed, low and deadly. Hiccup glanced at the twins, begging them to get him off the hook. Tuffnut stayed in a fearful silence, but Ruffnut slowly stood up wrapped her long, delicate fingers around the shaft of the axe.

"Snotlout, Tuffnut and I dug it up."

\_Ooh, dear! What's Astrid gonna do next? Find out next chapter! If you have any ideas or theories as to what will happen next, please don't hesitate to ask me questions on my new blog! If you haven't seen it already, the link is up above. Follow me! Please!\_

## 12. Behind Closed Doors

\_Okay, for those of you who haven't yet followed my blog, please do, it's worth it because I'll be able to communicate with you quickly

and effectively and you won't have to wait until the next chapter comes out to get all my latest news! Other than that, thank you very very much for reading! I really love all your kind comments and I'm really heartened to find that my story is bringing such happiness to you all. \_

\_My blog â€" \_

\_Tasemon's Partner: Thanks! I hope Stoick and Astrid will not disappoint you! (Stoick might. I don't know yet)\_

"Are you \_crazy\_?!" Astrid screamed, swinging her axe across her body and tossing Ruffnut onto the ground. The twin crashed into a bookcase with a yelp. The blonde then turned on the brother, her teeth bared. "Do you have \_any idea \_what you've done?!" Her axe was above her head. Tuffnut rapidly shot to his feet and backed away.

"Uh, uhm, question is, did Snotlout have any idea what he did?" He stammered as his back hit the wall. For a second, it looked as though Astrid would stop and think, but then she uttered another enraged cry and swung the axe, apparently attempting to take his head off. Tuff dropped the the floor as his helmet went crashing across the room, well and truly dented along the side.

"Astrid! Stop!" Hiccup cried from across the room. "Violence isn't going to solve this! You know that!"

She turned to him. "Oh, I think it will!" The blind fury in her eyes startled him as she turned and headed for the door. "I don't think Snotlout \_does \_know what he did. Maybe I should go and \_tell \_him..."

Hiccup planted himself firmly in front of her, his arms up, his eyes pleading. "Come on, Astrid. Calm down. This isn't going to solve anything."

"Get out of my way." She hissed coldly.

"This isn't you. You don't lose control like this any more, remember? You've got to stop, Astrid... please, for me..."

She stood for a second, looking as though she was going to murder the boy who stood in her way, but slowly, slowly, her shoulders slumped, her axe fell to the ground and she turned to look away.

"You're right, Hiccup, I don't. I'm sorry... I just..."

"Don't worry about it. I felt the same way when Ruffnut came to find me. The thing is, we've got to think of a plan together, and we might need you for that. This thing is probably coming for Berk right now, and I'm going to need everyone's help in getting rid of it..."

"But, what about Snotlout?" Astrid muttered.

"Even him. I'll go and see him because I know what I want to say. Besides, he might be in two halves if I send you."

Astrid sat facing away from the fire on the bench beside Fishlegs. The plump Viking was absorbing all there was to know about the dragon they were preparing to face. She herself was moodily sharpening her

battle-axe, sliding the stone in long, sweeping strokes down the blade. Tuffnut was right beside the fire, examining the damage to his helmet, his sister beside him, staring at the dark ceiling.

"Ugh!" Tuffnut groaned, stroking the dent delicately. "I can't even put this on my head any more! I'll have to take this to Gobber or something. I mean, look at this!" He shoved it under his unimpressed sister's nose. "That was a huge swing! It would've take my head off!"

"It's a shame it didn't," She purred nonchalantly. He scowled, preparing to reply with a comment of his own.

"Oh, give it here!" Astrid snarled, snatching the helmet away. "Fishlegs, hold this right here and mind your fingers!" She placed the helmet dent down on the table and Fishlegs did as he was told. She lifted the axe handle up over it.

"Wait! What are you doing?!" The twin yelled in anguish. His sister grabbed him and held him still as Astrid brought the butt of the handle down on the dent. Once. Twice. Thrice. She then lifted it up to the light, examining it, and tossed it into the brother's lap.

"There, that'll do until you can get Gobber to look at it."

"Wow... thanks, Astrid." He whispered. Although the dent was still blatantly obvious, he could now get the helmet on his head. She smiled.

"No problem. It was my fault anyway."

Across the village, pacing through the dark, starry night, was Hiccup. He was approaching Snotlout's house, illuminated in moonlight. He could smell the clear, cold winter approaching, along with the salty tang of the sea. Reaching the door, he gave it a hefty knock.

It was Spitelout that answered the door. "Yes?" He snapped, "What do you want?"

"Good evening, sir" Hiccup was polite and calm. "We arranged a night exercise with the Dragon Academy, and Snotlout hasn't... uh, that is to say, we forgot to tell Snotlout. Would you be able to go and get him for us?" One good thing about Hiccup was that he was very, very good and judging people. Spitelout nodded, without saying anything, and disappeared inside. Soon after, there was a loud crash, followed by a bleary hand groping at the door and pulling it open. There Snotlout stood, his belt hanging loose, his helmet at an angle and only one arm in his waistcoat. He glared hatefully at the one who had dragged him out of bed.

"What's this all about? I didn't hear anything about this!" He snarled. Hiccup quietly reached behind him and closed the door, then pulled his waistcoat up properly.

"Snotlout, we need to talk."

They sat together on the rocks, overlooking the cliffs and the sea, the grass softly waving in the light breeze beside them and the

harbour spread out below. Hiccup sat across from his friend, looking at him in pity as the boy held his head in his hands and groaned.

"I had no idea this would happen, okay? I just thought there might be treasure inside that I could take back to my father..." He looked up pleadingly. Hiccup's face remained rigid.

"You dug up what you thought was a grave. If it had been, it would have been one of my ancestors, Snotlout."

"I know, I know..." He moaned, looking out across the ocean.

"You know... I think your father loves you just as much as my father loves me." When the boy scoffed, Hiccup continued more eagerly. "If you want to make him proud, just be yourself. Do what you've been doing from the moment you joined the Academy. He's proud of you for that."

"No, he's not. He's never been proud of me. Not like that."

"Of course he has, Snotlout! Remember the Thawfest games? He was lifting you up on his shoulders, screaming your name, he was proud!"

"Yeah, he was! And then I messed it all up!"

"That was my fault. I shouldn't have been so competitive. Look, Snotlout, your father loves you. I know he does. Whenever you do something that makes him proud, he will come to my dad and talk about it with him. I've seen them."

"You... have?" Snotlout looked up hopefully, his eyes shining with happiness.

"Yeah, I have. Your dad doesn't like you to see that he loves you. He has high standards. He pushes you hard. But deep down, he does love you." Hiccup smiled at the look of joy on Snotlout's face. "He just has a funny way of showing it."

\_Naw, doesn't Hiccup just have a wonderful way with words? At least he'd made Snotlout feel better without losing his cool over the grave-digging thing. Good for him! Once again, don't forget to follow my authors blog on Tumblr, I'd be most grateful for any following I get! Until the next time!\_

### 13. The Plan

\_Chapter 13 already! Wow, thanks for sticking with me this far!

—

\_Guest: Thanks! You're very kind!\_

\_Jesusfreak: Glad I got the right person. I didn't realise there was that much tension! Sorry!\_

\_Guest: Yes! Crazier than a spirit dragon! Exiting!\_

\_Guest: He certainly did! I chose him to flop into that chair on purpose, to create an image. Glad you picked it up!\_



\_Now, time to begin!\_

Toothless' wings scooped the air, thrusting him forward at the head of the dragon formation. To either side of him, Fishlegs and Astrid flew, their dragons being slightly smaller, their wings in no danger of clashing. Finally, at the rear of the arrow-head formation came Barf, Belch and Hookfang, their riders clinging on to the dragon's necks and trying to avoid one another's gaze. Snotlout had made it clear that he would deal with the twins later, but that hadn't stopped him glaring at them whenever the opportunity arose.

The formation wheeled around perfectly, the dragons staying in line with the ones in front with practised accuracy. Hiccup turned to give a signal to Astrid and Fishlegs.

\_Break formation. Circle behind me.\_

The two dragons slid into single file, the others following suit behind, and they followed the Night Fury as he started a wide circling manoeuvre that would allow all the riders to communicate without hand signals. Hiccup assessed the group. All of them were carrying weapons, so that, in the event of a close combat situation, the teens would be able to defend themselves. Astrid was carrying a first aid kit, Fishlegs, the Book of Dragons, Snotlout, a large collection of bolas and the twins had long ropes to be used as slings if one of the dragons was injured and needed support to fly. Hiccup really had thought very carefully about everything, every eventuality, and had taken into account all the suggestions made by his friends.

He knew he would have to be prepared. They had no idea of the shot limit of this dragon, and Berk would be defenceless if it were to lay siege to the village. The chief's son hoped they were all okay, crowded into the great hall together. His father had wished them well before closing and barricading the doors. He had stayed to protect his people from the inside, trusting his son and his dragon to keep them safe from the outside. Hiccup exchanged a tense look with Astrid, who held his gaze steadily, trying, somehow, to comfort him without words.

"Okay, Fishlegs. Tell us what we're up against." He called out to the Gronkle. The rider pulled the book out of its protective cover and flipped it open to one of the last pages.

"Okay, so the Burrow Barrow is a boulder-class dragon. Its main weapons are its teeth, long and serrated, and its fire, a huge column of bright blue flame. I'd suggest keeping away from its head, but its one blind spot is right behind its ruff. Maybe if we could hang there, we could knock it out or at least confuse it and make an attack elsewhere. Also, its tail is hard and bony. Beware if it uses it as a whip."

"Okay, great. We've got to think of a plan." Hiccup stroked his chin.

"Don't we have to find it first?" Tuffnut shouted out, raising an eyebrow. The others looked over at him, genuinely considering this. All eyes fell on Hiccup.

"We need to have a plan before we find it. We can't plan while its attacking."

Astrid stood up in her stirrups. "What if we come at it from two sides, confusing it?" She suggested.

"It'll be in the forest. It's too risky for all of us to fly through the forest. We might... miss it, or hit each other. Or something..." He thought for a second, then a light seemed to come on in his eyes. "But that does give me an idea. When we find it, I want Stormfly to come from one side and Hookfang from the other. Your dragons are quick enough on the ground not to need to fly at the thing. Together, you can drive it into the sky, where Toothless and I can drive it towards the ocean. I'll need Meatlug and Barf and Belch on either side of it to keep it going straight, and together, we can drive it to Dragon Island, where it can live in peace. We're not here to kill it, we're just here to move it along and protect the village." Hiccup explained.

"So if it's not absolutely necessary, we don't fire, right?" Astrid shouted. The group leader nodded his accord. The others were exchanging looks.

"Does everyone understand? Any suggestions?" Hiccup was determined to have everyone on his side, and everyone nodded silently, comprehending everything. "Okay, then, lets get this over with..."

Toothless wheeled out of the circle, slightly dizzy with all the sweeping around, and shook his head to clear it. His flight was steady and strong. The others fell into the same arrow-head formation behind him, following his every move. There was one thought in all of their minds. \_What if this doesn't work? \_

Stormfly calmly fluttered up beside Hiccup, her rider voicing her own concerns to the group leader.

"Hiccup, what do we do if this fails?"

"I don't know, Astrid, but our plans don't usually go to plan, do they? As long as we communicate with each other, I think we should be fine. Make sure you stay in my line of sight and look out for the others." He looked at her pale face, and swallowed, tightening his grip on Toothless' neck strap to try and still his shaking hands. "It's gonna be fine, Astrid. I promise. Whatever happens, I will bring us \_all\_ back alive."

With a nod, Stormfly broke away from the formation, searching the thick forest for any sign of the Burrow Barrow. The others followed suit, like some sort of silent, pre-planned agreement, fanning out across as much forest as possible. Toothless dropped to just above the tree level, his sharp eyes peering through onto the dappled forest floor below. His search was helped by the sun, shining down behind him and lighting the needle-strewn ground. Hiccup leant over his shoulder, his hand moving slowly to the dragon's neck, finding comfort there.

"Easy, Toothless. Not too fast, there, bud." His soothing words slowed the dragon's speed. His eyes darted to and fro across the tree tops. Secretly, Hiccup couldn't deny that he hoped he would not find

the dragon at all. In fact, he hoped he would never see it again. There was a distinct possibility that it had already burrowed itself away for another century and he wouldn't have to worry about it any longer.

These hopes were quelled in an instant as a cry went up from the North. Toothless' head jolted up, alert and searching the skyline. He angled himself in the direction of the call, listening for another. He adjusted again as the second came. Hiccups grip tightened once again on the neck strap.

"This is it, Toothless." Hiccup whispered, heart in his mouth. "It's time."

\_Here we go! Now it gets exiting! Next chapter, the teens go into battle with the Great Burrow Barrow, so stay tuned for more! Don't forget to R+R, You guys keep me writing.\_

#### 14. Into Battle

\_Into battle we go, on board with the teens as they battle the vicious Burrow Barrow. I do realise that the name is a little bit rubbish, but there we go. Deal with it!\_

\_Guest: Thanks. I changed my profile picture because I've had this account for around 4 years now and have never changed it. The image is a concept sketch by artist Nico Marlet of Fishlegs riding a Hideous Zippleback, drawn before the film was released. I just really liked it.\_

\_Jesusfreak: Thanks! I'm trying to update daily during the holidays so that I can get this done before college starts again, so I'm working hard!\_

\_Guest: I know, I tried. Glad it worked\_

\_HideousZippleback: I'm really glad you're back, you were always so nice. I'm also glad you're enjoying this. I'm trying hard I promise!\_

\_Note: I sincerely apologise for the wait for this chapter, I appear to be having trouble with the Document Manager at the moment. Hopefully, the kind people at FictionPress will soon have it sorted!\_

Hiccup could see the glow of the white scales even before he saw the dragon hovering above. Hookfang circled the grove in which the Burrow Barrow was slumbering, his rider shouting out to him.

"Hiccup! I found it! Look!"

"That's great, Snotlout, well done! Keep circling, we'll wait for the others before we attack." Hiccup called back, steering Toothless to fall into line behind the Monstrous Nightmare. Now, he could get a truly good look at the dragon they were about to face.

It really was an incredible sight. The Burrow Barrow looked as though it could very well be dead, so tightly was its skin stretched over its bones; and yet, all around it lay the remains of a truly glorious

feast. There were the bones of many sheep, a yak, possibly, and its gigantic maw was littered with sparkling fish scales. Certainly, this creature was no stranger to a good meal, but perhaps it ate so infrequently that it had no time to put on weight. \_Then again\_, Hiccup mused, \_it could just be meant to look like that. \_

Whatever the reason, its skeleton frame made it look all the more mean. Jagged teeth protruded upwards from its thin jaw like tusks, glinting in the sunlight as the dragons soared above it. It was completely oblivious to them all, though, even as the Zippleback and Nadder joined them, so deeply was it sleeping. It seemed that no force on earth could cease the giant's snoring.

"Where's Fishlegs?" Astrid called out to the others, looking around for any sign of the Gronkle. The twins shrugged their shoulders unhelpfully and Snotlout just blinked blankly. Hiccup exchanged a glance with her, and she rolled her eyes. "I'll go and find him..."

"No need, I'm right here!" They all turned to regard their comrade disapprovingly as his dragon fluttered sedately into the circle. Her rider's mouth was hanging open in awe. "Whoa! Look at that thing!"

"Is everyone ready?" Hiccup called, meeting the eyes of every rider in turn. Astrid, Snotlout, Ruffnut and Tuffnut, Fishlegs, they all nodded back to him, pale-faced with excitement. "Okay. Snotlout, go into the forest on its left. Astrid, its right. Everyone else, stay close to me and Toothless. I'll give the signal when its above the trees."

As the two detailed riders flew to their opposite posts, Tuffnut scratched his head and called out, "What's the signal?"

Hiccup simply rolled his eyes as the three dragons came together, hovering in the air and awaiting the start of the battle. It was just up to the two dragons in the forest below. Hiccup took the time to once again run through the plan in his mind. He could hear Fishlegs muttering to himself under his breath, and on the other side, the twins had begun to argue over something trivial that he cared little about.

Below, under the cover of the trees, Astrid crouched low in Stormfly's saddle, avoiding the scratching branches as she and her dragon moved closer to the slumbering mass that they could see glittering through the trees. Stormfly gave a tittering chirrup and skittered to the side, obviously uneasy with the situation. Her rider hushed her and stroked her neck carefully.

"It's okay, Stormfly. It's gonna be okay. Just trust me..."

Across the clearing, the Monstrous Nightmare was equally as skittish, growling and shaking his head. His rider patted his neck calmly, though his heart was hammering.

"Come on, Hookfang. You're a warrior! Warriors don't get scared! We can do this, you and me. We're gonna make my father proud and save the village. Hey, we might even get a statue!"

Over the Burrow Barrow's shoulder, Snotlout caught sight of a flash

of cyan blue. The two dragons were in position. Above them, Toothless let off a loud plasma blast, the signal for them both to awaken the sleeping dragon. Hookfang's great maw opened, a sheet of flame engulfing the side of the enormous dragon. On the other side, magnesium fire sparked off its shining scales as Stormfly bathed it. It took only a second for the dragon's bright blue eyes to snap open. Its head shot into the air, glowering at the dragons attempting to hurt it. With a cry of surprize, it rose up onto its spindly legs, a deep, throaty growl thrumming through the air. The two dragons continued their assault, their target backing away with a roar. Its wings opened with a snap of leathery membrane and it beat furiously up into the air. The grounded riders gave shouts of triumph.

"It's working!" Ruffnut shouted in elation as the dragon took off to escape its assailants. Its blue eyes scanned the air, picking them out almost immediately, and it turned to head in the opposite direction, banking to avoid them. Heading straight to Berk.

"No!" Hiccup cried, shaking his head. This plan couldn't fail. He wouldn't let it. "Guys! I'm going to drive it back towards you! Remember what I told you!" And with that, Toothless shot off in pursuit of the Burrow Barrow. He glided easily over its glimmering lengths, hanging in its blind spot, then zoomed out in front and let off a loud plasma blast, hitting the end of its thin nose.

With a hideous roar of pain and confusion, it back-winged, hanging in mid-air. In an instant, Hiccup's friends were around him, surrounding the dragon and blocking its path. They were ready to drop into position and guide the dragon away, just as Hiccup had asked. He felt a glow of pride at how well they worked together and how effective it was. This was what it felt like to be chief. This is what his father felt whenever the Hooligans did anything as one. He couldn't suppress a grin. This was amazing.

But the Burrow Barrow wasn't going to play their little game. It had certainly had enough of this. Its sides ached, its nose stung and its eyes were watering with the pain. From deep in its stomach came a burning heat, a primal power, and its teeth bared as its chest flared that horrible, bright, electric blue. Its jaw fell open like a hatch and the column of flame came burning out, sweeping across the pathetic individuals that dared disturb the great dragon's sleep. A strafing blow, the heat was breath-taking. Meatlug dropped from the air, Hookfang tossed himself aside, Toothless strove up and up above the attack. The only two left in its path were the Zippleback and the Nadder.

Stormfly struck out with her wings, desperately trying to out-run it, but Barf and Belch had frozen in place, staring at the approaching wall of flame, their riders screaming in terror and tugging on their horns. The flames blocked the other rider's views for a second, before they saw the two-headed dragon again, falling towards the earth with a strangled cry.

\_Oh man! I'm so sorry, but this was exactly the length I aim for when writing chapters and... oh my god, I had to take the opportunity to leave you guys hanging because I'm a mean person! I love you really, I just couldn't pass this up. Stay tuned, I'm still writing as fast as I can to get this done, so don't expect to wait for too long before you see the next chapter!\_

## 15. Fire and Flames

\_I tried not to keep you waiting too long, so now, here you have it: the next chapter! I hope you're all enjoying this so far!\_

\_HideousZippleback: Damn! I can't stop spelling surprise wrong! Thanks for picking that up, if I get around to I, I'll change it. Also, it's not a Boneknapper, although they are sort of related.\_

\_Jesusfreak: BECAUSE I'M EVIL MWAHAHA!\_

\_Alyssa: I'm writing! I hope it was interesting before...\_

There was a sickening moment when, for a second, both Ruffnut and Tuffnut thought they and their dragon were plummeting to their deaths. Their clothes and hair were blackened by the heat of the Burrow Barrow's flame, and it was hot enough to take their breath away. Gasping, they tugged forcefully on the Zippleback's horns, crying out in abject terror.

With a sudden jolt, the dragon seemed to come to their senses and, with a grunt, their wings whipped out and they swooped back up into the air, clipping the tops of the trees as they went. The Zippleback beat their wings ferociously, gliding around the back of the Burrow Barrow. Something suddenly occurred to Ruffnut.

"Wait... did Barf and Belch mean to do that?" She called to her brother. He gave her a blank look.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, are they trying to fool the Burrow Barrow so that we can come around behind and hit it when its not expecting it?"

Tuffnut blinked. "No idea," He shrugged, "But we may as well do that anyway, seeing as we've got the chance!"

Hiccup scanned the skies for a sight of the injured dragon, but there was no sign. Suddenly, he heard a deathly roar of voices. His eyes clapped onto the sight of a dragon heading straight for the white dragon's back, mouths open and one head spewing noxious gas. Before the Burrow Barrow even had a chance to look around, the other head lit it and a huge explosion ripped through the air. They heard the dragon scream as Barf and Belch shot across its head and out towards the other riders, Ruffnut and Tuffnut throwing their arms above their heads as they came.

The dragon fell towards the earth, its long wings trailing behind it as it plummeted below the trees in a flash of white. The dragon academy re-grouped around Hiccup and Toothless, looking between each other in confusion.

"Did we... kill it?" Fishlegs whined quietly, a hand at his lips.

Hiccup shook his head. "No, I don't think so..." Toothless dipped and flew closer, followed by the other dragons. His teeth were bared.

Below, they caught sight of the Burrow Barrow, curled up in a knot, the skin behind its ruff blackened and raw.

The twins exchanged glances. They'd done this to the poor dragon. It was shaking and quietly whining to itself, licking the wounds on its sides. Its tongue flicked over its nose. Suddenly, its eyes snapped onto them and, with an enraged shriek, it leapt to its feet, teeth bared and wings raised defensively.

"Stay back, everyone," Hiccup ordered and flew Toothless closer to the dragon, his hand outstretched. The Burrow Barrow kept its eyes on them, swallowing and licking its nose again. It was obviously not looking to trust the boy.

"Easy there, its okay. We just want to help..."

For a second, it looked almost as though the burrowing dragon was going to concede to Hiccup's invitation, but suddenly, with a screech, it snapped at them, then let forth a great column of fire. The flames hit the rider and dragon and sent Toothless spiralling down towards the earth, his tail in scorched tatters. Astrid cried out to them and swooped down, but too late: Toothless opened his wings and managed to slam into the ground with only minor damage. Hiccup, however, was thrown from the saddle and into the dirt. He looked up, groaning. Over them loomed the Burrow Barrow, seething with rage, its fore paw hanging over them to crush them.

"Stormfly! Spine shot, now!" Astrid's cry came from over head. The Nadder's spines flew towards the creature and embedded themselves in its leg. The dragon let out a scream and lashed out, almost catching Stormfly as she tried to escape. Snotlout and Hookfang instantly took her place.

"You will not hurt my friends!" He cried out, giving Hookfang a sharp nudge with his heels. A cloud of fire raged from the Nightmares mouth, pushing the other dragon back. It's wings rose up out of the smoke and it shot into the air with amazing speed, soaring straight over their heads and off into the sky.

"Guys! Just like we planned! Guide it to Dragon island!" Hiccup cried out at the top of his lungs; He felt rather pathetic, shouting orders from the ground. Snotlout gave a nod and swung Hookfang in the direction of the fleeing dragon. The twins followed his lead, the Nightmare and Zippleback streaking out across the forest in pursuit.

Stormfly landed beside Hiccup and Toothless, Astrid already sliding off her back with the first-aid kit in her hands.

"You guys alright?"

"Yeah, we're fine. Toothless managed to slow our fall with his wings." Hiccup patted the dragon's forehead.

"Have you got his spare tail on you?" Astrid was already stowing the kit away in her saddle bag. She was itching to get away quickly.

"Yeah, I'll be up with you soon, don't worry. You two go on and make sure no-one hurts themselves."

The blonde gave a sharp nod, leaping quickly up into the saddle. He caught her giving him a quick smile as Stormfly's wings flashed open and beat quickly up into the air. Hiccup turned, a smile on his own face, and reached back to retrieve Toothless' spare tail-fin from his own saddle bag.

"Come on, Stormfly! Faster, girl!" Astrid shouted from the Nadder's back. The poor creature was flying as fast as she could manage, trying her best to please her rider, streaking out across the forest. They were fast approaching the large, white dragon as it was guided away by the other riders. Above it, she could plainly see Fishlegs and Meatlug silhouetted against the bright clouds, and to either side flew the Zippleback and Monstrous Nightmare. Somehow, she noticed, they had the dragon flying with no complaints. It wasn't snapping at them or even trying to get away.

As she pulled closer, she could see the riders all working as one. It was a glorious sight, now she could see clearly; the Burrow Barrow itself gleamed in the sunlight and flew quite sedately. Quickly, the Nadder pulled alongside Fishlegs.

"Wow, guys, this is amazing! How did you get it flying like this? Why isn't it attacking you?"

"Well, we did exactly what Hiccup said. We didn't fire at it, we just guided it using the other dragons." Fishlegs replied. "Turns out it wasn't so unfriendly after all!"

"This is boring!" Tuffnut complained loudly.

"Yeah! There's no blowing things up involved!" His sister agreed.

But Astrid wasn't listening. She stared out into the distance, her eyes narrowed, spotting something approaching. Squinting and standing up in the saddle, she tried to make out what it was. And then, suddenly, it hit her.

"You do realise you were supposed to be driving it away from Berk, don't you?" She snarled, rounding on Fishlegs, who cowered slightly.

"We... We are!" He stammered unsurely.

"Oh really? Why don't you take a look over there?"

It wasn't long before they had all seen what she had. In the distance, coming closer with every wing-beat, was Berk.

Oops! Now what are they going to do? Find out next chapter! And did Barf and Belch mean to come around behind the Burrow Barrow? We may never know!\_

## 16. Going Down

With the Burrow Barrow heading straight for Berk and almost no time to come up with a plan, how are the teens going to stop it without enraging it further and making it angry again? Why is it heading for



Berk in the first place? Can they save themselves, the village \_and\_ the dragon? Read on to find out?\_

\_I'm sorry if your review is not getting replied to when you post it, for some reason they seem to be coming through in the wrong order (For example, this time, I had one from the 18th, one from the 19th and one from an hour ago). Sorry!\_

\_Guest: You're right, those naughty teens will be seen by Stoick eventually!\_

\_Guest: Yeah, Changewings for one example. Also, I'm sorry, but I'm not going to change my profile picture back. That's the only thing on here that I have purely for the enjoyment of myself. Everything else is tailored for my readers pleasure. Sorry!\_

\_Hiccup is not useless: Thank you for your kind words once again! I shall be sure to keep going!\_

The Burrow Barrow seemed to put on a burst of speed as it neared the borders of the village. Its wings beat dangerously close to the two dragons who were struggling to keep up with its racing pace. Looking into its eyes, they could all see that the dragon was intent on reaching their home. Astrid screwed her face up tightly, searching for an answer, but there seemed to be nothing.

"We have to do something, but if we blast it, it'll attack us again!" Fishlegs cried out, racking his own brain for a solution.

"I know!" Astrid called back, sighing. "Oh, what would Hiccup do?"

"Funny you should ask that. Here he comes!" Snotlout shouted from below them. All five teens craned their necks around to catch sight of the approaching Night Fury. Astrid felt her heart soar; there would soon be an answer to the problems.

The Burrow Barrow let out an earth-shattering roar. Perhaps the answer wouldn't come soon enough. She gulped. There wasn't enough time. They were already pulling over the first of the houses.

"If we use the dragon's bodies, maybe we can steer it away from the village!" She cried out. It was a good enough plan for the rest of the gang. Meatlug dived down beside Barf and Belch, Stormfly joining Hookfang. "Okay, everyone!" She called, "Towards the sea! Fishlegs, Ruff, Tuff, give us some room!"

The two dragons to the right arched slightly aside, the ones on the left closing the gap between the Burrow Barrow's head and themselves. The great, white dragon turned away to avoid them, unknowingly moving its body as well, and it slowly began to glide out towards the sea, giving the village a wide berth.

"It's working!" Fishlegs cried out in excitement. Grins adorned the faces of all of the teens. The village would be safe after all. There was a flurry of wings from above, and Hiccup and Toothless appeared above Astrid and Snotlout.

"Great job, guys!" He laughed. "That was a great idea, Astrid."

"Why, thank you, Hiccup, I thought it was too" She smirked with mock-self satisfaction, grinning from ear to ear. The cliffs passed by in a blur below them, earth turning to rippling water.

It seemed the celebrations had started too soon. All of a sudden, the Burrow Barrow seemed to realise what was going on. Its eyes darted away, and it gave a sudden cry, turning back. It smashed into the Nadder and Monstrous Nightmare, sending both tumbling towards the ocean. Their riders gave a cry.

"Ruff, Tuff, follow that dragon!" Hiccup commanded as he and Fishlegs rushed to the aid of the falling riders. The Zippleback banked sharply and gave chase. The Burrow Barrow seemed bent on destroying the village. Perhaps, if it was to get rid of all the people on the island, it could finally be peaceful again. Ruffnut and Tuffnut looked at one another; they felt a certain responsibility for this.

"Come on, sis, lets show this dragon who's boss!" The brother cried. His sister nodded, a sly grin on her face, and with a nudge, Barf and Belch gave a burst of speed, shooting beneath the large dragon. Ruffnut tugged on Barf's horns, leaving a trail of gas in their wake. As they overtook the Burrow Barrow, Tuffnut deftly lit the gas. The explosion ripped through the air, knocking the white dragon back. It gave a roar and slashed out with it's long claws, dealing a raking blow down the Zippleback's spine. Barf and Belch squealed, fluttering out of the way as the Burrow Barrow continued its flight.

"Barf! Belch!" Ruffnut cried in alarm, looking back. "They're hurt!" It was true; she could see the dark, black blood beginning to pool in the long wounds. "Hold them still, Tuff! I'm going back!"

As his sister began to crawl back slowly along Barf's neck, Tuffnut looked around himself in horror. Belch chirped uneasily. The White dragon was circling them, it's blue eyes fixed on them. Suddenly, its chest was glowing again. Tuffnut cried out in fear.

"Hang on, sis!" He shouted back. "Barf, Belch, drop!" The Zippleback's wings clapped to its sides, just in time to avoid the column of fire above its heads. Ruff gave a scream; she was losing her grip. The blood made her dragon's hide slippery. All of a sudden, the drop stopped, and she slid off its back all together, just managing to grab a fore paw.

"Tuffnut! Help!" She howled, looking down at the ground so far below. There was a hand almost instantly around her wrist, her brother hauling her back aboard. Barf and Belch were looking back curiously, and she smiled lopsidedly at them. "Thanks," She sniffed breezily, sharply punching her brother's arm. "Now, what are we going to do about this wound?"

"Astrid has the bandages. If we hold on till she gets here, we should be fine," Her brother replied. "Besides, I don't think they're as bad as they look. Come on, we have to stop that dragon!"

Together, the twins clambered back up to their saddles and took command of the dragon once again. They swooped to the side, trying to catch up with it. Behind them, they could see the other riders coming to their aid. Before them circled the dragon. So magnificent it

looked, silhouetted against the sun, light shining through the membrane of its wings. It swooped towards them again, intent on wiping them out. The twins prepared to fire at the dragon, but Barf gave a sort of hollow cough and wheeze. He was out of gas. Looking at one another in terror, the twins simply braced for impact, Their eyes closed.

The impact never came; it's head was suddenly surrounded in a halo of purple light, and Toothless went whizzing past at an impressive speed. Temporarily distracted, the Burrow Barrow snapped its teeth at them. The Night Fury turned sharply and came through for another pass, shooting towards the white dragon and unleashing another flurry of fire.

"Great shot, Bud!" Hiccup cheered from his saddle. Toothless span around and let out a roar, taunting the other dragon. The Burrow Barrow bared its teeth, but weakly, shaking its painful head. It was losing altitude, falling towards the trees below, the glow of its chest going out like a light, along with the brightness of its eyes. Soon, its wings had stopped flapping all together. The creature crashed into the forest with a sickening sound.

"Did we get it...?" Ruffnut asked cautiously. The twins stared at Hiccup, who was trying to assess the dragon below.

"I... I think we did..." He sounded rather sad, quelling the twin's celebrations. "I think its dead, guys..." He whispered, his brow creased with emotion. Toothless gave a low moan of sadness.

Together, the academy descended, landing softly in the clearing made by the dragon's fall. Hiccup was the first at the Burrow Barrow's side, looking it over for any sign of life. He touched its shoulder; the skin was cold. Slowly, the other riders moved closer, each placing a hand on the creature's flank. Hiccup closed his eyes, almost overcome.

"Its dead..." He whispered. Toothless groaned.

Hiccup felt a hand on his shoulder and looked up to find Astrid smiling softly at him. "You did all you could, Hiccup. It just... wasn't enough." She tried to comfort him, but he shook his head.

"I shouldn't have fired. Toothless and I, we were the ones who killed it. We're to blame for this," he muttered, looking away.

"No, Hiccup," Came a rough, gravelly voice, "It's our fault..." Ruffnut stood beside her brother, a hand on his shoulder, with Snotlout guiltily staring at the floor on her other side. "If we hadn't dug it up in the first place, none of this would have happened..."

"Come on, guys," Fishlegs said softly, "We need to go and tell Stoick that the danger is over."

Astrid nodded. "We can come back to blaming someone afterwards." Though everyone nodded and went to their dragons, no-one really felt like flying. They walked mutely back towards Berk, the mood as black as the on-coming clouds that threatened rain and snow. A storm was on its way.

Tuffnut, trudging at the rear of the group, looked back over his shoulder to find his sister still kneeling by the great, white dragon's side. Her hand was placed upon its scales, and she stared at it with a searching look. Tuff bit his lip. He was losing her again, he could feel it.

"Hey, sis, you coming?" He called back, letting Barf and Belch walk on. She shook her head, and so he went back to her side and knelt beside her. He wouldn't leave her, not now. "Come on, sis. This isn't like you. You're always so crazy and stupid..." He looked down, searching for something that wouldn't sound weird. "What's going on with you?"

"Tuff, we just killed this dragon. Is that not enough for you?" she growled. He sighed softly.

"Look, I know this is hurting you, but can we please go back to Berk? Maybe you'll feel better when we get back." He cast a glance upward at the rapidly darkening sky. "Besides, I don't like the look of this weather, do you?"

She nodded, standing up with him and allowing him to lead her away. As she followed behind her brother, she hazarded a glance behind her. The dragon was still lying there, perfectly still. Suddenly, she almost fell down with shock and fear, whimpering.

"Tuffnut...?"

"Yeah, what?"

"I don't think we killed it..."

\_Did the Burrow Barrow live or is Ruff hallucinating? Find out next chapter! Another cliffhanger? I spoil you guys. I know its a long chapter, but I didn't want to split it in two because I wanted to give you all a lovely cliffhanger to annoy you. Hehe. \_

## 17. Rising Again

\_Okay, so now the twins are in real trouble. They're all alone with a waking Burrow Barrow with nothing by a couple of weapons to defend themselves. What are they going to do now? Stay tuned to find out!\_

\_As you may have guessed from the age this has taken me to upload, I'm back at college and exams are starting on Monday. Bear with me, I'm trying!\_

\_Jesusfreak: I would but I have exaaaaaaaams! Sorry!\_

\_Guest: No problem. Thank you, and I'm sorry I can't do more for you...\_

\_Guest:Thanks!\_

"It's waking up!" Ruffnut screamed, stumbling back into her brother, a hand gripping the handle of the mace at her hip. Tuffnut gasped in

awe as the creature's head rose, looking more furious than ever. It's blue eye snapped on to them quickly, targeting them as it heaved itself up onto its unsteady legs. Its wings spread out above it, but they were too weak to lift the dragon into the air; it was more for balance than anything. Staggering, it turned to face the twins, a lilting snarl on its lips.

There was only one thing Tuffnut could think to shout. "\_HELP\_!" He was answered with an ungodly, screeching roar. The creature whipped forward, its rows of sharp, glistening teeth snapping at them. Ruffnut bravely swung her mace, missing, but the gesture was plain. Another roar, and the Burrow Barrow loomed over them, swiping at them with its sharp, knife-like claws. Both twins tried to dodge, though Tuffnut yelped as his leg got in the way of one, glancing down for a second at the tear in his trouser leg. The cut stung like nothing else.

The dragon took a second to lift its head and look at them curiously, before its chest hummed and shone bright blue.

"Get down!" He heard his sister yell, as she leapt on him and pulled him to the ground. A seething wall of flames engulfed the clearing, the trees on the edge catching and blocking their escape route. The twins exchanged glances.

Obviously thinking it had destroyed them, the Burrow Barrow turned its head for Berk. Ruffnut leapt back to her feet, pulling her brother up with her. He reached for the mace swinging at his own hip, and both riders charged forward, beating the creature's ankles. It howled, looking down and snapping its teeth again. Tuffnut saw his sister running for the opposite side of the clearing, straight between the dragon's legs, and followed, stumbling, feeling the wet of blood running down his thigh.

She stopped to wait for him, halfway there, taking a second to observe the Burrow Barrow as she did, but the dragon hadn't finished with them yet. Its tail came sweeping around like a whip, hitting her with sickening force and knocking her quite a way across the clearing. Tuffnut cried out her name, rushing to her side, but it was obvious that there was nothing he could do. She was well and truly unconscious. Now, the dragon was coming for him.

His heart hammering in his chest, he ran this way and that, holding its attention but not presenting himself as a target for the creature's fire. If he could only hold on until the others got here, they'd both be saved. The claws came scything for him again, the tail sweeping over his head, but in its rage and fatigue, the dragon was becoming confused. Its aim was off.

Suddenly, he felt strong arms grasping his, lifting him up and away from the furious dragon. Turning, he found Snotlout hauling him into Hookfang's saddle, looking grumpy, as well he might.

"I thought we killed this stupid thing!" He complained, ill-tempered. Tuffnut swung his leg over Hookfang's neck.

"So did we! But then it just got up and attacked us!" the twin yelled over the wind, gripping the back of Snotlout's saddle; there was certainly no way he was going to wrap his arms around the boy's stomach.

"What happened to Ruff?" There was an uncharacteristic amount of concern in his voice.

"The dragon- whoa!" He cried out as Hookfang dived to avoid a burst of fire. "The dragon whipped her with its tail. It was pretty awesome, only... she won't get up..."

"Come on, we can't leave her there." Snotlout had a knack of sounding heroic at times like these. "Let's go get her!" With a nudge, Hookfang dived down under the dragon's belly. Both Tuffnut and Snotlout leant off his sides, reaching out to scoop up the body of the girl that was fast approaching, but, just as Snotlout was about to close his fingers around her jerkin, Hookfang suddenly spun out of control and crashed into the ground, tossing his riders aside.

Tuffnut tried to scramble to his feet, but felt a sudden stab of pain in his thigh that made him cry out; he'd almost forgotten the wound to his leg. Crashing uselessly to the ground again, he coughed out an angry sigh.

"Snotlout! Gimme a hand over here!" He called.

"Hang on a second!" Came the reply. The boy had his hands up, desperately trying to calm his dragon, but the Monstrous Nightmare was having none of it. Seething and hissing, his spines quivering on his shoulders like hackles, the creature was twisting and coiling, his teeth bared. He was in outrage. How dare that white dragon knock him down? "Hookfang! Would you just calm down a second!" Finally, the dragon was listening. It was lucky the Burrow Barrow was absorbed in snapping its teeth at Toothless, who was neatly winding around its head, just out of reach.

Tuffnut tried again to get up, succeeding until he put weight on his bad leg, which gave way under him. Hookfang turned to protect them as Snotlout rushed over to his friend.

"How come you could get up earlier, but not now? You were running all over the place!" The Jorgenson boy snarled, hauling the twin roughly to his feet.

"Probably the fear," came a voice from behind them. Ruffnut was sat up, a hand to her head, but conscious again at least. "When you're scared, you tend to forget about pain. Besides, if he was running around, he probably made it worse."

"You know, maybe we should knock you on the head more often. You're actually making sense, for once," Tuffnut snorted. He received a black look in return.

"We need to get going!" Snotlout snarled at them both, Hookfang appearing beside him, ready for him to climb in to the saddle. "I can give you a lift to your dragon, but Hookfang can't carry you guys forever."

"We'll take what we can get!" Ruffnut was on her feet, though a little wobbly, staggering towards them. Snotlout reached out a hand, having just pulled her brother aboard, and helped her up behind him.

"Let's go!" He gave Hookfang a nudge, the Nightmare raising his wings and labouring into the air, thrusting his wings powerfully to get away from the Burrow Barrow as soon as he could. The white dragon couldn't help but notice their escape, turning to close its jaws around them, but a flame to its head from a certain Nadder quickly distracted it again.

"You guys okay back there?" Snotlout shouted back. Hookfang searched the skies for any sign of the Zippleback, calling out to them.

"I'm okay!" Tuffnut bawled. "Are you okay?"

Snotlout rolled his eyes, finally catching sight of Barf and Belch who were coming rapidly towards them. They hovered overhead for a second, checking out their riders, making sure they weren't badly injured. Barf's nose recoiled from Ruffnut somewhat, smelling the dirt, perhaps, but as soon as his rider's hands were upon his nose he seemed to calm down.

"Come on, sis, let's go!" Tuffnut grinned, hauling himself into his saddle.

"Right behind you!"

\_Finally done! Sorry about the long wait, I'm trying to get these done quickly! If anyone's interested, I can link my Deviantart, where I will soon be uploading Touch of the Dead as a web comic, drawn by myself (I'm not fantastic, so be warned!). Leave an answer if you R+R!\_

## 18. The Death of the Dragon

\_Okay, so, here we go with the next chapter!\_

\_Guest: Actually, don't worry, it was only two days late! I will warn you up here when the last chapters are coming, and, if its ready, I will post a little taster of my next story on the end to whet your appetites!\_

\_HideousZippleback: My English Language lecturer warned me of this! I like you. Even though you did make me do English Language and 7 o'clock in the morning.\_

\_Tasermon's Partner: Thanks for all the kind things you said about the story, it's very nice of you to say so! I'm trying to get each character's individuality into at least one part of the story, if not more. \_

"We need a plan..." Hiccup muttered, more to himself than the dragon he was riding, though Toothless gave a helpful hum of agreement. The chief's son observed the battle raging around them. The Burrow Barrow hadn't moved out of the clearing into which it had fallen, held there by the efforts of his dragon riders. They would have maybe a five minute gap if they were to stop before the creature reached the village. It was enough.

Toothless was out of shots, Stormfly was on her last. Hookfang couldn't go much longer and Barf was already saving on gas. He had to

do something. But what that something might be, he still had no idea. Underneath him, the trees were smouldering silently in the rain that had just began to fall, sending up the smoky scent of burnt pine. The sky was black with thunder and lightning, the wind beginning to pick up, and he could see all of the dragons beginning to labour in their flight; fatigue was taking hold, and fast. Toothless' breaths below him were ragged and heavy.

He bit his lip. It felt as though he could do nothing. He looked over to where the fight was still ongoing, catching sight of Meatlug spinning, out of control, into the forest below, too weak to continue. As gently as he could, Hiccup directed Toothless towards Stormfly, who was hovering nearby.

"Astrid!" Hiccup called out, "Please tell me you have an idea of how to stop this thing attacking!"

"I don't! If we stop attacking it, it'll wipe us all out!" The girl was stroking her dragon's neck affectionately. The Nadder gave a low croak, getting weaker by the second.

"Wait... would it?" An idea was blooming in Hiccup's mind. The realisation spread across his face. "Or would it just leave? It's as tired as we are. Who's to say it wouldn't just give up?"

Thunder roared across the sky, the lightning flash preceding it blinding them for a second. Astrid was staring at Hiccup in awe and confusion.

"It's worth a try..." She said finally, looking from the chief's son to the dangerous Burrow Barrow. Rain was now pouring down in sheets, soaking them instantly to the skin, making their clothes seem heavy and cold. With a nod, the leader directed his dragon towards the Nightmare and Zippleback, who were still trying to occupy the white dragon.

"Guys, fall back!" He shouted, hand signals wholly forgotten. The three riders looked back at him as though he had gone mad, but they obligingly did as he asked, directing their ailing, fatigued dragons towards their leader. As they passed, Hiccup took the time to observe the Burrow Barrow closely, noting its behaviour and body language. It seemed shocked, then pleased, and finally elated as it spread its wings in blood-thirsty excitement. Crouching low, the dragon gave one last heave and managed to get itself aloft. Now it was coming for them in earnest, finally about to have its revenge.

But the elation only lasted a second; there was no way it could continue flying. Already, it was losing altitude, and its chest wouldn't glow, no matter how it strained for fire. Knowing it was defeated, it seemed to give in, its wings spreading one final time. As it gracefully fell, tail first, from the air, heading towards the cliff-edge and the sharp, finger-like rocks protruding from the sea, the Burrow Barrow gave one last effort, one final lunge, its teeth closing around Toothless' tail and dragging him down with it.

Hiccup's scream mingled hideously with the cry of a falling Night Fury. Down and down they plummeted, Toothless desperately wriggling to be free. It was a truly sickening feeling, being pulled to your death from the sky. Hiccup would easily admit that he enjoyed



free-fall, knowing Toothless would catch him, but this was nothing remotely like it. The intense fear and sickness boiling inside him; this was worse, much worse.

With a sharp cry, the Night Fury freed himself, flaring his wings and gliding to the safety of the cliff-top. His tail-fin was wedged open by the connecting rod, bent by the serrated teeth that had grasped it. It was pure luck; had it been broken, he wouldn't have made it.

The boy could hardly watch as the Burrow Barrow hit the rock-strewn waters, its body racked and smashed into a bloody mess as it came against the finger-like promontories. There was no sound, no death-scream. Just an ungodly silence that engulfed and smothered all.

Stoick the Vast loomed over the three individuals, his face as red as his long, knotted beard. Behind his broad figure, the Vikings of the village were re-setting the Great Hall after having been walled up inside for a good part of three hours. The ceiling, hewn straight from the mountainside, ached over them, covered with marks where those ancient picks had torn away at the rock. Here and there, great, decorated pillars of stone rose from the floor to the cavernous expanse of ceiling, holding the mountain from crushing them all. Closer to the ground, the walls were smooth and carved with vast portraits of dragon killers.

"Listen to me, I am talking to you!" The chief snarled as one individual's attention was distracted by a bench being righted beside him. Tuffnut looked back at Stoick, a guilty look on his face, allowing the chief to continue. "This is a very serious offence. Even if the barrow was not a burial, the thought that it could have been is a sickening one. What on earth were you THINKING?" His voice rose in anger, a voice trained to be heard over the roaring of the waves in the heart of a storm, causing the teens to flinch. Snotlout raised his hand to speak, his voice trembling.

"It was my fault, chief. They wouldn't have done anything if it wasn't for me..."

Stoick rose to his full height, looming over them, his arms folded across his broad chest. "Explain yourself, lad." He boomed.

"I just..." He caught sight of his father over the chief's shoulder, at the back of the hall, helping right tables and light the fire-pit. "I just wanted to make my dad proud..."

"By digging up a grave?! That'll do quite the opposite!"

"No, by... by bringing back the treasure inside. I thought he'd be happy..." Snotlout's voice trailed away as he realised just how weak his argument was. However, there was a flicker behind the great, bushy beard. Stoick nodded silently, understanding, perhaps.

"I will give out my punishment later. Until then, you're all on thin ice. Do you understand?" His eyes fell on all of the teens in turn, lingering on the last. His brow creased in concern. "Ruffnut, are you feeling alright?" He asked. Anger wouldn't stop him from caring for them. She looked up at him blankly. As the others turned, they too could see what the chief meant.

The girl was deathly pale, her hands trembling slightly. There was a tightness to her that only her brother noticed, holding herself rigidly upright, her jaw clenched, but there was no mistaking the dull pain in her eyes and the darkness underneath them. Questioningly, she looked at them all, not trusting herself to speak but trying to appear confused.

Stoick pursed his lips. "Go, all of you, and get some rest. I can deal punishments later, when you're all recovered."

They turned to go, heading over to meet up with the rest of the group. Now that it had been mentioned, it seemed Tuffnut had picked up on her dragging feet and masked pain. Ruffnut couldn't deny it; she felt awful; but that didn't stop her from trying to cover it up. Everything seemed foggy, inside her head and out. It was like viewing everything from inside a cloth bag. She wasn't paying attention as they reached the others and didn't pick up on their conversation until Astrid looked directly at her.

"Ruff..." Her face paled, eyes widening. "You're bleeding!"

"Huh? What?" The girl slurred. Astrid was on her feet in a second, coming closer, reaching out and wiping the stream of red from the side of her face.

"I really think we should get you to your bed, Ruff..." Astrid whispered, lifting off her helmet and handing it to her brother. Tuffnut held it tightly, anxiety plain on his face. Astrid's hand danced lightly over the side of Ruffnut's face, picking out a large swelling just inside her hairline. "When did you smack your head so badly?"

Ruffnut bit her lip, taking a moment before slurring the answer. "When it whipped me, I think..." The bag was getting tighter, making everything more foggy. Blood was running freely down her face, her friend trying desperately to stop the flow with a cloth handkerchief. Her breath rattled loudly around her. The twin let out a groan, everything beginning to spin. She stepped back from everyone, as though she was about to run, but everything suddenly pitched and rolled, like a boat in a storm, and the next moment, she was gone.

He barely even heard himself calling her name as she went crashing to the floor. Both he and Astrid were around her in a second, Tuffnut getting in the way more than helping, but there was no way he could leave her.

"Sis..." he croaked, so low that only the two girls could hear him, "Don't leave me..."

\_Oh, the pain! Poor Ruffnut is out like a light! Will she survive, or die of her injuries? That depends on how evil you think I am. I'll leave you guys guessing!\_

## 19. The Mound Rebuilt

\_Okay, so this is the last chapter, sorry guys! But don't worry, there will be another story soon enough! If anyone has recently read

the comments on my story 'The Sickness', they will find that I have received a piece of anonymous hate from a reader. I would just like to say that, since they came so ready to be displeased, they are of no concern to me and that their harsh words, though upsetting, are to be ignored and neglected for the kind and beautiful reviews that I receive from other readers, both guests and those with names (Jesusfreak, Hideous Zippleback, Hiccupisnotuseless and Tasermon's partner to name a few). I will not be turning off anonymous reviews. I'm just offended by the cheek that person showed.\_

\_Rant over. I love you guys!\_

\_Hiccupisnotuseless: You're just about to find out! I will see whether I will do the comic version, I'm not sure yet\_

\_Guest: Still only two days! Thanks for the kindness, it's much appreciated!\_

The sunshine beamed down upon the small gathering. The clearing in which they stood was coated in soft, flickering grasses and tiny, fluffy white flowers. Around them, tall pines stood around like silent, guarding sentinels, their branches reaching out to one another in a grand, impenetrable circle. The small crowd of Viking were amassed before a large long barrow, freshly build, still made of mud and tramped down by boots only the day before. Stoick the Vast, chief of the Hooligan tribe, stood out front, slowly droning a tribute to the one who lay inside the barrow.

However, Tuffnut wasn't listening. It wasn't like he'd listen any other day, but today, he was particularly inattentive. He stared at the mound, reliving the days he and Snotlout had spent, alone, building it by hand as their punishment. Each day, when woken, he had slid down from his chosen sleeping spot, the rafters, where he and his sister had always slept. Now, waking up without her beside him, it just felt strange. Leaving the house, he would meet up with Snotlout and trudge through the forest on foot. The rest of the day would be spent toiling in the sun and the dirt.

He looked at his hands blankly. There was still mud ingrained under his fingernails, the skin dry and neglected. Looking up, he found Astrid looking at him with something resembling pity in her sky-blue eyes. He gulped, looking down again, unable to hold her steady gaze.

The ceremony finally complete, Stoick gave a respectful bow to the barrow and turned to walk back, the rest of the village following, so that it was only the five teens remaining, gathered in a quiet semi-circle, gazing at the mound in silence. Fishlegs' lip trembled slightly, and he left the group to be with his dragon.

"She was a fighter, for sure..." Astrid said softly, breaking the wall of silence. Her eyes searched every member of the group, lingering on Tuff. As Snotlout bustled quietly away to be alone and Hiccup sat back with Toothless a small distance from them, Astrid's fingers brushed Tuffnut's arm comfortingly.

"It was my fault..." He croaked softly. "She didn't have to die..."

"It's gonna be okay, Tuff. I promise. If you need anything, I'm here

for you, okay?"

He met her gaze and forced a smile. "Yeah, okay..." She gave his arm a soft squeeze before turning to leave him in peace. He looked the mound over, hoping it was tribute enough for her. Kneeling down, he reached out a careful hand and placed it upon the side of the barrow.

"I'm sorry... You shouldn't have had to die..." Almost choked up, the twin sat back on his haunches. He felt a sudden hand on his shoulder and looked up to see his sister's face, shining and smiling wonkily. Her skin was pale and ghostly, but she was trying her best to disguise it as she bent down and carefully placed a small bunch of perfect, pink flowers on the edge of the barrow.

"Looks great, Tuff. I'm sure she appreciates it."

He suddenly and violently came to his senses, leaping to his feet. "Sis!" He cried, "You shouldn't be out of bed!"

"Oh, who cares?" She shot back loudly.

"I do! You should be in bed!"

"Whatever..." She snorted, somewhat weakly, but then seemed to experience a change of heart and sank to the floor slowly. Her brother flopped down beside her, trying to look annoyed, and yet he found that it was failing somewhat. He glanced at the burial mound.

"Do you feel like... it was kind of our fault she died?"

"Yeah. Even though the dragon killed herself in the end, we probably could have prevented it... or something..."

Tuffnut's hand slid softly through the grass and grasped his sister's, squeezing it tightly. Both twins were looking at the small gathering of flowers before them, the intricate patterns in the petals shining a muted greeting to them in the sunlight. Ruffnut winced as her head throbbed and gently rested it on her brother's shoulder. For some reason, it softened the ache.

After a long silence, her brother snorted and said, loudly, "So, you ready to go back?"

"Sure, whatever." Turning to find their dragon already stood behind them, the twins cackled softly to one another and headed for home.

\_Bit of a lame ending, but I guess I'm tired of this story now. In my defence, it is 19 chapters long. That's all, folks! A taster of my new story, Alone, will soon be joining this chapter to whet your appetites. Stay tuned, there's more to come!\_

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\_Storyline is copyright of me, Dissidia180.\_

## 20. Alone: Preview

\_stay tuned for my next story: Alone\_

\_When the twins crash land on an unfamiliar island, they know they have to get back to Berk. But with Barf and Belch grounded and no other islands in sight, will they make it?\_

\_Unnngh...\_

Very slowly, she felt the blackness receding from her mind. She couldn't remember a thing before the darkness. Her moans sounded strange in her head, echoing and reverberating. Her head pounded and throbbed painfully. Tentatively, she opened her eyes.

Everything was blurred, the light stabbing her eyes. The sounds around her seemed to be drifting to her ears like they were blocked with wool. The smell of damp peat and grass suddenly hit her nostrils, sending a cold chill through her system and awakening her further. She was acutely aware of a loud buzzing hiss in her ears that slowly raised in tone, bringing the volume of the outside world up as it did so.

"\_uuunh...\_" Ruffnut rolled onto her back. She had no recollection of crashing, but that was the only explanation her muddled brain could present to her as she slowly began to wake up. Finally, she could see clearly, hear clearly and think clearly. "What happened...?" She groaned, reaching up to touch her head as the pain died away. She couldn't help but find it weird that she didn't feel any stiffness or injury in her body, save for the continuous throb of her head. Slowly sitting up and brushing herself down, she jabbed several points that she thought would be most likely to be hurt, but found nothing.

"Weird..." She breathed. Suddenly, the hair on the back of her neck stood up on end as she felt warm breath against her nape. Swallowing, Ruffnut turned nervously to find herself staring into the bright yellow eyes of a Deadly Nadder.

\_Coming soon!\_

End  
file.